UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

From Heathland to housing: a study investigating how the settled Gypsy community in a Village in the South East of England express and sustain their identity

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ABSTRACT

From Heathland to housing: a study investigating how the settled Gypsy community in a Village in the South East of England express and sustain their identity.

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In this thesis I explore and analyse how participants in a 'settled' Gypsy community, living in bricks and mortar in an isolated area, articulate, express and sustain their identity. The term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is used to encompass a variety of groups and individuals who have a tradition or practice of nomadism in common, and although the Housing Act 2004 (Legislation.Gov.uk) definition of 'Gypsy and Traveller' includes those who inhabit bricks and mortar, settled Gypsies remain less studied or understood than those who maintain aspects of a travelling lifestyle

For decades, Gypsy-Travellers have been considered and described as 'hard-to-reach' (Van Cleemput, 2007). Yet the term 'hard-to-reach' sometimes reflects a lack of knowledge on behalf of the researcher about how, who and where to contact certain groups or individuals, rather than an innate inclination for separateness of the group or individuals concerned. This ethnographic study was made possible by the established links made by the researcher in a professional context with the group members and was characterised by a collaborative approach to understanding the participants' lives. The study was carried out with members of a small Gypsy community living in social housing in a rural village in South East England who participated in interviews and a series of art workshops to articulate and reflect upon their Gypsy identity. The art workshops provided an innovative approach to facilitating extended discussions about the participants' lives and experiences, during which they also produced artefacts for the public expression of Gypsy identity. Analysis of the interview transcripts, field notes, recordings of workshop conversations and a visual record of the art works and of the public exhibition which (at the request of participants) concluded the research processes which were framed by aspects of identity theory. Participants gave their informed consent to the research activities and their anonymity has been protected by the use of pseudonyms.

The study revealed the cohesiveness of this community, and the individual strengths and resilience of a group which might previously have been overlooked by research about Gypsy-Travellers. Participants demonstrated that despite their settled status, they pro-actively sustain their Gypsy identity through the maintenance of some traditional practices, visiting their childhood homes, and inducting their own children and grandchildren into Gypsy life. The images and artefacts produced in the workshops centred on some of the iconic representations of traditional Gypsy life, and the central importance of family was consistently evident in the conversations held with all the participants. The stories and reflections generated by this study strongly challenge the notion that only people who travel 'count' as Gypsies. These findings illuminate broad agreement of other studies that that the accommodation situation of Gypsy-Travellers in England is one of the root causes of a number of other significant problems (Niner, 2004; Greenfields and Smith, 2010)which include - low levels of educational attainment (Bhopal, 2004); poor health chances (Parry, Van Cleemput, Peters, Moore, Walters, Thomas and Cooper, 2004); and, differential access to social care

services (Cemlyn, Greenfields, Burnett, Matthews, and Whitwell, 2009) and other services provided by local authorities (Commission for Racial Equality, 2006).

Recommendations from the research study include the need for practitioners to provide culturally sensitive services. The project clearly established that working collaboratively alongside participants enables a more a trusting relationship to be forged and that undertaking collective art activities is an effective strategy for mobilising participation and eliciting discussion with marginalised communities on personal topics as in this case, group identity.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

From Heathland to housing - a study investigating how the settled Gypsy community in a Village in the South East of England, express and sustain their identity

Gypsies have been present in most of Europe and Asia for centuries, and their history is marked by governmental attempts to exoticize, disperse, control, assimilate or destroy them (Okely, 1983:1). From the Middle Ages to the present day, they have been the target of racial discrimination and outright genocide (Puxon, 1987:12). The common perception that Gypsies/Travellers are merely a 'social group of nomads, with no bona fide cultural values distinct from the host society, threatens to undermine other ways of looking Gypsy identity' (Liégeois,1994:51). Increased traffic on the roads and fewer places to stop challenges Gypsies' ability to maintain their traditional identity as Travellers. In the 21st century, following a succession of policies of settlement enforced by the state alongside the lack of appropriate stopping places, most Gypsies are house dwellers – estimated to be at least 76 % (Peacock and Herbert, 2014).

In 1994, the racist disciplining of Gypsy/Travellers was furthered by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA), which criminalized unauthorized residing on land whilst also removing the requirement for the state to provide sites. This forced many Gypsy/Travellers into low quality social and private housing, often in economically deprived areas (Smith and Greenfields, 2012).

In this study, I explore the way in which a small group of 'settled' Gypsies, living in local authority housing in an area of rural isolation, sustain and express their identity. Much research on Gypsies and Travellers is focused on health and education, and there are limited studies on Gypsy identity, especially in the context of the housed Gypsy community. My intent was to explore how Gypsies in contemporary society negotiate their everyday challenges and manage their identity; this is important because it delineates and 'defines the division between belonging and being an outsider, between the 'them and us' (Drakakis-Smith, 2007: 464), especially for those in settled communities who are unable to follow what they would describe as a traditional lifestyle.

Gypsy identity is important because aspects of state legislation and the media seek to define what 'is' and 'is not' a Gypsy. From the early 16th century to the advent of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, governments have passed several significant anti-Gypsy statutes. Whilst some policies may have been well meaning, they none -the-less have stopped Gypsies managing their own identity. There is still evidence that

relationships between the nomadic Gypsy and settled society are laced with conflict and antagonism as was seen in previous centuries (Mayall, 1988). These views are generally based on inaccuracies, myths and stereotyping. There are two opposing stereotypical images of what constitutes the 'real Gypsy'; the first suggests a past golden age of the nomadic Gypsy, travelling the lanes of rural England in a brightly painted caravan, telling fortunes and carving wooden pegs (Clark and Greenfields 2006). The other dominant image is of the criminal, undeserving, and dishonest Traveller, someone to be feared.

One of the earliest recorded examples of large-scale settlements of Gypsies being forced into housing was in the South East of England (Smith and Greenfields,2013:48). Although Smith and Greenfields (2013) make reference to the Gypsy community in the South East of England and how they were forced into compounds, there is comparatively little written about Gypsies who were forcibly housed in rural areas.

In view of the unusual circumstances surrounding this particular community, I wanted to explore how these settled Gypsies manage their identity in contemporary society. The aim of my research was to work in a collaborative way with the participants, in order to understand how they express their sense of Gypsy identity. My previous role as a community social worker in both rural and urban contexts, has raised my awareness of the need for culturally sensitive approaches, which was an asset in terms of approaching the community. In addition, I have worked as a community artist in a range of settings which has given me practical experiences of using art as a way of engaging with people of all ages and from a variety of backgrounds. This enabled me to appreciate the benefits of using art as a way of stimulating discussion as well as increasing feelings of confidence and a sense of well-being. I knew the community has a history in craft making over the generations, and I aimed to use this method to encourage their responses to the research question.

Aside from the legislative pressures against travelling, changes in the nature of society and industry had a profound impact on the economic basis of Gypsies' daily life and culture, and their ability to pursue a traditional lifestyle (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 53).

Evidence suggests that the settlement of Gypsy communities has resulted in an increasing economic bifurcation of many sections of the community, between those who have successfully adapted elements of traditional economic practices by moving into construction work, trading and associated areas, and a significant population of long-term unemployed and economically inactive Gypsies and Travellers (Greenfields and Smith, 2011).

> A lack of available work, low levels of literacy and increasing welfare dependency are factors that have led to the rapid decline of traditional employment practices in localized and spatially isolated spaces of acute exclusion (Greenfields and Ryder, 2010:7).

The situation of the Gypsies in the study is one of particular isolation and discrimination. Those in the study group are in an unusually vulnerable position in relation to being able to identify their ethnic status. Among those Gypsies who are settled in housing, a high proportion live in inner-city environments or large towns, where they are able to access services; for those in this study, their village (or hamlet) is in a rural location, with few opportunities for employment, and extended contact with family members and with other Gypsy groups. Access to services located in even nearby towns is extremely challenging due to lack of transport and poverty; these factors limit people in gaining their own independence, for example by having their own transport.

> In common with many other minority groups this group are representative of the poorest and least skilled sections of the community, who lack the resources to make choices – such as, for example, purchasing their own land or homes, or in fact even choosing where they want to live; so It is only those who have the most economic resources who are able to maximize their accommodation and lifestyle choices (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 91).

Those who do have the resources to purchase land are likely to experience extreme difficulty in gaining planning permission to live on their site, with 95% of planning applications made by Gypsies being refused (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). There are countless examples of local communities mobilizing to oppose Gypsy site provision or housing to Gypsies in their neighbourhood (Cemlyn et al, 2009). It is not surprising therefore that housed Gypsies and Travellers are particularly prone to racism and prejudice from their neighbours (Greenfields and Smith, 2010, 2011).

The discrimination and racism experienced by Gypsies is related to their opposition as outsiders in a sedentary world.

> Dominance, inequality and injustice, are often maintained by reference to stereotypes, and stereotypes are therefore significant obstacles to the development of anti-discriminatory practice (Thompson, 2001:29).

Most racism consists of reducing a racial group to stereotyped representation. 'Stereotyping is a negative product of the mental process carried out by people to categorise or divide people into groups, based on preconceived characteristics' (Morris, 2000:215). 'So, often people who are significantly different from the majority are

frequently exposed to 'them' rather than 'us', and this creates a binary form of representation' (Morris, 2000:216). Stereotypes are created to serve as a substitute for 'standing in for what is real' *(ibid.).* 'It becomes dangerous when people use stereotyping as a way of simplifying complex things, or people, in order to deal with what frightens them or with what they do not understand or know about' (Morris, 2000:216). When people go on to learn from the media or the press about people of whom they are afraid, this only confirms their 'reductive assumptions and encourages them to continue in this simplistic and sometimes prejudicial thinking'*(ibid.).*

In the past, Gypsies were an ethnic group whose appearance was strikingly different, and whose way of life resembled that of vagrants, a persecuted marginal group (Mayall, 2009). Many Gypsies report being marginalised and bullied in relation to their being 'dirty' which Bhopal refers to in her research as 'white racism' (2011:326). Whereas whiteness is also understood as a supremist identity, 'the white identity of Gypsy children was seen in the opposite light to those who are considered clean, acceptable members of society; the 'white' identity of Gypsies is seen as being 'unclean, distant and alien to other members of society' (Bhopal, 2011: 327). Prejudice against Gypsies and Travellers therefore draws on the dominance of 'sedentary' ideology and historical stereotypes (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:135). Stigma in relation to British nomadism runs so deep that Gypsies (and Irish Travellers), remain the most excluded groups in Britain today (Commission for Racial Equality, 2006). This stigma is not just confined to Britain but is mirrored across much of Europe, with similar dynamics of marginalization and exclusion reproduced across different spaces (Bancroft, 2005, cited by Powell, 2008:88). These stereotypes have persisted regardless of whether Gypsies are nomadic or settled, indicating that it is not nomadism in itself that generates such antipathy towards Gypsies (Clark, 2006). It seems that 'Gypsies have become a subclass because they have been placed there by another culture which fears them' (Powell, 2008:90). For Gypsies and Travellers the prevalence of deviant stereotypes with which they are commonly associated means that their move into housing is often accompanied by a fear among their neighbours of further social decline, disorder and crime alongside high levels of anxiety within others in the community (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:136).

Gypsies in the South East

The geographical location of this research is ranked as being 10th in the most deprived 10% in the South East Region, with a significant number of residents estimated to be suffering from the highest levels of unemployment, premature morbidity, and life limiting illness (Peacock and Herbert, 2014).

The earliest records of Gypsies in the research area were in 1638. Then, Gypsies were able to camp in small groups anywhere they wished within the county – 'they had their usual places to stop where they often met up with their family and acquaintances' (Arnold, 2009: 34). Little is known about when Gypsies first arrived in the area (Smith, L., 2004), as there are only a few official records such as parish registers and census returns which make scant reference to Gypsies, and they provide little information other than names and locations. Therefore, the story of the Gypsies that have resided in the region over the last 5 centuries can only be read in the context of the overall history of the area (Smith, L., 2004).

The majority of Gypsies and Travellers (75%) in the county have now moved into what they choose to refer to as 'bricks and mortar' accommodation, and they are represented in every district in the county, with 25% living on authorised local authority or private sites (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). The largest number recorded in the area of research (423), is in the south of the County (Hampshire County Council, 2015:9). Although the 2011 Census recorded 2,069 Gypsies and Travellers living in the study area *(ibid.).* they remain a 'hidden' population, and therefore exact numbers are unknown. The census does not collect all the information concerning Gypsy origins due to the fact that there is a reliance on people being prepared or willing to disclose this information (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). It is therefore impossible to be exact, primarily due to poor recording of ethnic data and low self-ascription *(ibid.)*.

Gypsies have had a long association in the study area, with local names being traced back to the 18th century (Smith, L., 2004:26). In around 1830, the numbers of Gypsies in the area are recorded as being several hundred (Crabb, 1831). 1870's Church records show that at least two Gypsy children a month were being christened at the local church (Smith, L., 2004:29). Benders, shelters and tents were commonly seen in various parts of the area throughout the 19th and into the early 20th century (Smith, L., 2004:28). The Courts were very active after Stuart times, and although there are details of poaching offences, damage and theft of timber and illegal encroachments, there were no known cases involving Gypsies, demonstrating that there was 'no active prejudice shown against them at this time, with no trumped-up charges' laid at their door (Smith, L., 2004:28), which provides some evidence of their general acceptance *(ibid.).* Local stories between 1891 -1912, report Gypsies co-existing happily with other communities (Pateman, 2008:8).

In 1899, a report Griffiths presented a report to a local authority council meeting, highlighting the hardship Gypsies were suffering; describing their 'ill equipped lodgings and fragile tents' being a poor defense against a winter storm (Griffiths,1892: 10), he added

> Their conditions of life are very hard and must waken the sympathy of every feeling heart. The Gypsies of the locality are a fairly numerous body, living in vans or tents … in summer, pitching their camp in the shade of trees, in winter under the sheltering screen of furze and scrub … driven from place to place by the policemen (De Crespigny and Hutchinson, 1899:70).

The enclosure movement and passing of parliamentary Acts, began to accelerate land reclamation in the early years of the nineteenth century; 'This process had devastating effects on the rural communities around its margins' (Smith, L., 2004:147). 'Many common lands were fenced off and if not retained by the local manor, were sold off to the highest bidder; 'suddenly the villager had nowhere to graze his animals and many faced starvation' (Smith, L.,2004:155).

Up until the 20th century, many areas in the region were very isolated. Most roads were no more than dirt tracks, and commoners and others living in rural areas were able to lead a hidden, almost secretive life. Until 1925, the Gypsy custom was to live in the open heathland, camping singly or in groups anywhere in the open regions. They were not allowed to stay in the same place for more than 48 hours, but some moved around frequently, whilst others settled in remote places, staying there on a more permanent basis, and being tolerated to do so (Duffy, 2017). There was a sense of belonging held by those who lived in small groups, most of whom rarely travelled further than to the next village (Smith, L., 2004:152).

Early visitors to the area regarded Gypsies as an essential part of the mystique of the scene, enhancing the overall sense of wildness and freedom that a visit to the countryside engendered; there was little friction between Gypsies, commoners and cottagers – each regarded one another as simply being a different type of indigenous inhabitant (Smith, L., 2004:153). Rural life meant that everyone had 'their place and valued each other for the contribution they made to at that time' (Smith, L., 2004:155). Gypsies were generally accepted by other residents in the area; and the 'commoners' had lived happily alongside them for generations (Vesey-Fitzgerald, 1973:204). 'The country-folk amongst whom they lived, knew and respected them and their way of life, for they depended on each other' (Smith, L.,2004:90). The Gypsy relied on the Gaudje as he needed customers for his crafts, and in return the Gaudje needed the casual labour force for work picking fruit and working on the land; in addition the commoners and farmers valued their help with animal husbandry and seasonal labouring (Smith, L., 2004: 101).

At the beginning of the new century, rural areas in the county were becoming a more accessible and attractive place to live. Building programmes meant that a new type of resident was moving in, known colloquially as 'the new wealthy' (Vesey-Fitzgerald, 1973:204). With

improved rail and road systems, even remote rural areas were in easier reach from towns and cities around the country, and more accessible from London and the suburbs.

Life was about to change. In 1923, areas in the region came under the control of the recently established Forestry Commission. It was their responsibility assess the state of the woodlands (Smith, L., 2004: 159). The Gypsies did not escape scrutiny.

The establishment of the compounds

No one seems to know why the compound system was started, as there were no recorded complaints against Gypsies. By 1926, the Forestry Commission had 'corralled groups of Gypsies into official enclosures' (Duffy, 2017:2). Seven areas were identified to which the 'unsuspecting Gypsies were herded' *(ibid.).* The largest encampment was in the study area, with numbers reaching in excess of 400 in the 1930s (Arnold, 2009: 13).

With local pressure mounting, byelaws were enacted by the local authority; the Gypsy families had two options, to obey, or to leave the County borders (Duffy, 2017). Permits to live in the compounds were issued and these licenses attempted to control 'what people could do, and where they could go' (Smith, L., 2004:36).

Their new living quarters lacked rudimentary facilities, such as a running water supply and this began to cause resentment from local farmers, who now had to share their system with the constant stream of Gypsies which reportedly 'rendered the land into a boggy mire in wet weather' (Smith, L., 2004, 184). Despite this, the move into the compounds was considered by the local authorities to be largely successful, and even though there was a distinct lack of even basic amenities, the residents appeared to settle into their new life (Smith, L., 2004).

Gradually, people began to make short journeys into other parts of the area not only to get away from the crowded conditions of the compounds, but more importantly, to earn a living. The compounds were used as a base, with residents following the seasonal routes in the locality.

> Whilst 'hawking' had been welcomed by the community during the first and Second World War years, when household goods and labour had been in short supply, attitudes gradually began to change (Smith, L., 2004:34).

People did not want handmade pegs when they could buy manufactured ones, and door knocking was now considered an intrusion. 'The Gypsies were seen to be leading a parasitic lifestyle, selling things they had made from 'free materials' – which would nowadays be seen as recycling' (Smith, L., 2004:34). 'Eventually, considered a nuisance by their newly arrived middle class neighbours, the Gypsies became the subjects of many lively debates' (Smith, L.,

2004:36). Having been inundated with complaints, the local authorities took measures to resolve what they now called a 'Social Problem'. A committee was appointed in 1946 to investigate the state and condition of the rural areas and heathlands, and 'to recommend such measures as they consider desirable and necessary for adjusting the forest heaths to modern requirements' (Smith, L., 2004: 38).

Post Second World War

Nationally, there were also societal developments. 'Troops returning from the Second World War felt that the Country owed the common man 'an improvement in his lot' (Smith, L., 2004:187). The Gypsies may have expected that the policies against them would be relaxed after the War, and that they could continue to be part settled and travel seasonally. However, this was not to be the case. Villages near the compounds suffer more than inconvenience from these undesirable neighbours (Smith, L., 2004).

In 1946, a committee was appointed to re-assess the state and condition of the open land and in 1947, this comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the area was presented. The ensuing report was a scathing and discriminatory attack on those families who were living in the compounds. The report described the conditions in the camp:

> In the Gypsies we meet a problem of more than local significance…… while the standard of living in this country is steadily being raised, a group is allowed to live in the area which has hardly reached the standard of the Stone Age…
> (Smith., L: 20014:112)

And:

> The Gypsies, it is true, have not been heard in their own defence, but we have visited their camps, and we should hesitate to describe them in detail. All concerned are anxious to remove these blots from the open land … *(ibid.).*
>
> I do not in any way uphold or encourage them to continue in this semi-savage state. It is disgraceful that the camp is allowed to exist in this so-called enlightened Twentieth Century, and I hope ere long they will be compelled to live in cottages as other people do and send their children to school. It will be better for them, and for everybody else *(ibid.).*

This report set the tone for officialdom for many years to come (Vesey-Fitzgerald, 1973: 180). Tenants were 'handpicked'; those who had returned from the Second World War, were considered more 'worldly' and more likely to accept the local authority plans. 'Initially, families were actively encouraged to move to move into what were known as rehabilitation camps'

(Smith, L., 2004:112). Later, based upon the need for the 'reclamation of character and education' of the Gypsies this was to be enforced (Smith, L., 2004:191).

> As soon as the children's behaviour and morals have improved and their bodies and clothes have become clean…when the [G]ypsies have learned the ordinary mode of life, they would then graduate to council houses' (Smith, L., 2004:191).

The Gypsies were given no say in the decision which would affect not only their traditions and culture but also that of future generations. They had no choice in the move or location (Peacock, 2008). Vesey Fitzgerald argues that:

> There can be no doubt that the most important date in the recent history of the Gypsies of Britain, perhaps the most important date in all their long history, was in November 1947 when the report of the Forest Committee was published (Vesey-Fitzgerald, 1973:181).

In 1949, a newspaper produced a four-page feature about the compounds entitled 'Slums Under the Trees' (Lloyd, 1949); the remining shacks on the compounds were occupied by families who were waiting to be moved on (Smith, L., 2004:112).

> The villagers call them Gypsies; they say they are dirty and given to thieving. But for most of the tent dwellers in the area, none of these things are true (Lloyd, 1949:24).

The newspaper describes the 'contradiction', as the compounds were permanent settling places, and yet under the local bye laws, no dwelling could be built as a fixed home. The inhabitants were not even allowed to fix a door or a window into their home (Smith, L.,2004).

> Despite the dilapidated appearance of these shacks, inside they were cosy, warm and dry. Outside however they frequently had no water, sanitation or refuse collection. In winter, overcrowding and mud created problems(Duffy, 2017:4).

In 1958, the Hampshire Association of Parish Councils produced the following resolution:

> In view of the increasing hardship to 'Travellers' by the decreasing number of permitted camping sites, this meeting urges the County, on humane and educative grounds, to press the Government to provide the basic needs of this minority and to give Local Authorities financial aid for its achievement (In Hampshire Association of Parish Councils, 1959, cited by Smith., L. 2004:147).

Following these recommendations, in 1960 it was decided that 'all Gypsies who had been living in the compounds should be 'removed and rehomed into local authority housing' (Hampshire Association of Parish Councils, 1959, cited by Smith., L. 2004:147). The use of shacks, tents or

other temporary dwellings was now prohibited. To prepare them, the Council erected 22 Nissen huts which they named 'The Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre' (Smith., L, 2004: 147). There was some opposition from the Parish Councils Association, who favoured 'the provision of transit sites, better quality compounds and access to housing for those families who desired this accommodation' (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:118). However, these ideas were rejected, and the families were 'forcibly housed into the centres until they were deemed 'fit' to progress into housing' (Smith, L., 2004:112). Where there had previously been a good living in hawking, manufacturing goods, seasonal farm work, and horse trading and breaking, this enforcement interfered with the Gypsy way of life (Pateman, 2008:35; Smith, L., 2004:112), and the new regime affected their ability to earn an independent living as they had done in the past (Smith, L., 2004).

> It is easy to put them in a modern council house, which they don't know how to use and is not designed for their way of life. Allow this community to live its life as it wishes, by giving them sites …by helping them to continue their work for the community without feeling like administrative outcasts … You will remove the nomad and compound problem – at the cost of real human suffering (Howard, 1959, cited by Smith, L., 2004:114)

Despite Howard's recommendations, the policies were enacted; families were separated from friends and relatives and were housed in disparate areas, increasing their marginalisation and isolation (Duffy, 2017, Arnold, 2009). In order to ensure that the move was controlled, a warden and a social worker were appointed with the purpose of 'educating the families' *(ibid.).*

By 1974, families had been either housed in Local Authority housing, or on authorized sites in the area. Those who wished to pursue their nomadic lifestyle were forced to move out of the area (Smith, 2004). The fact that the Traveller communities were in some cases deliberately dispersed into housing with the intent of assimilating the community into the 'mainstream' population is a particularly damning indictment of the (then current) local authority policies (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:118).

However, the lack of site provision meant that most people were forced to accept bricks and mortar accommodation. Smith believes that the District Council may have deliberately separated families to minimize trouble (2004), demonstrating that there was little recognition of the family unit being integral to Gypsy culture; 'the contact and support within families are fundamental to the Traveller way of life' (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:118). Not all Gypsies and Travellers in housing have experienced these feelings of isolation, and there are many examples where families have been able to adapt their lifestyles and employment practices

over generations of living in bricks and mortar, in other parts of the country (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:117). The community who are the subjects of this research are an exception to this, due to their isolation.

Village A

Health issues

Rural isolation and lack of resources disadvantage this community. Their neighbours are those who are more affluent, live in private homes which are at the high end of the housing market, and who are more easily able to access the areas outside of the village. Poverty, and disability hinder the ability for the study group to make changes to their lives, and their access to services and amenities is limited which increases their isolation (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). Research indicates that many Gypsy families do not readily interact with statutory agencies, posing a challenge to those service providers (Parry et al, 2007).

Rural isolation

The residential concentration of Gypsies and Travellers in this local area was a direct outcome of the local authority approach to managing their nomadic population (Smith and Greenfields 2013: 158). The majority of the community are now dwelling in socially and spatially cohesive communities where they and their families have resided for several generations; many of those in the study group 'had previously travelled or resided on sites in the area' (Smith and Greenfields,2013:158). All of those Gypsies and Travellers participating in the study were allocated their home by the local authority housing department.

The integration of Gypsies from 1948 – 1960 was considered a success by the government. Yet Gypsies continue to be marginalized by society (Myers, 2017; Peacock, 2008). The County Consortium Accommodation Needs survey identified that people felt they had little choice about where they live, and they discussed how this affects their chances of gaining employment due to the poor transport systems in the area (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). Respondents living in the village also said that they felt lonely and suffered from both isolation from other Gypsy communities and their extended family networks, on account of being so geographically remote *(ibid.).* Most talked about living in poverty, and the detrimental effects of this; such as, not being able to afford public transport, limiting them from accessing services, supermarkets and other facilities (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). In the geographical area of research, the group are surrounded by highly priced housing which exacerbates their feelings of alienation and marginalization (Peacock, 2010). Since the move into permanent housing, their Gypsy ethnicity has become more invisible causing some aspects of their traditional heritage to be lost (Peacock and Herbert, 2014).

Mental Health

A December 2020 report has found that incidences of discrimination and hate crime are on the increase and are directly linked to poor mental health and an increase in suicide (Greenfields & Rogers, 2020).

A wide variety of research has evidenced that living in bricks and mortar is damaging to Gypsies' mental health (Parry et al, 2007; Peacock, 2010, Drakakis-Smith, 2013). Evidence shows that Gypsies have raised rates of depression and anxiety; Gypsies are over twice as likely to be depressed, and almost three times as likely to suffer from anxiety. Studies such as Parry et al, 2004; Peacock, 2010; Peacock and Herbert, 2014) suggest for Gypsies, a move into housing has a major psychological impact leading to higher levels of anxiety and depression, and possibly other stress-related illnesses. This is not only related to their accommodation status, but also to the levels of discrimination targeted at them – as reported by the respondents.

Artist Sven Berlin, who abandoned the artists' circle in St Ives to travel on a horse drawn wagon from Cornwall to rural areas of Hampshire, Berlin (1971), tells of meeting the 'Gypsy people'. Describing the harsh reality of life on the road, his narrative tells of the many people he befriended on the way, concluding with the closing of the Gypsy compounds and the battles faced by those who had been dwelling on the open heath land for generations. 'And so, to the tragic conclusion: the Gypsies' camping-grounds closed, their people forced into council houses, crushed by a society which cannot tolerate the exceptional, the eccentric or the nomadic' (Berlin,1971:11).

Berlin believes that the move into housing symbolized the end of the road for these Gypsies:

> The gift of the council house is the death warrant to the [G]ypsy people… the most perfect, most painless and most silent way of extermination. When others come to search it will only be for a thesis: the Gypsies will be gone (Berlin, 1971: 93).

Conclusion

To summarise, in this chapter I have introduced and explored the background of the community who are featured in this study, with an overview of the historical context of their Gypsy ancestry in the geographical area of my research. I have highlighted the policy of local government at that time and discussed the circumstances leading to how the community were accommodated in local authority housing, and the long-term effects of this. To recap, the community were forced into local authority in a rural area, where they have a long association which is relevant to their sense of identity.

I have provided evidence of the discrimination faced by the Gypsy community in general and explained how this has impacted on the housed community in the past and continues to do so in the current situation. I have linked my analysis to the perspectives presented by other writers.

In addition, I discuss the detrimental effects of the move into housing (bricks and mortar) with evidence from research to support the fact that their enforced move has resulted in poor mental and physical health within the Gypsy community in general. I have introduced the methods which I used aimed in order to enable me to work in a collaborative way with the community, who are disadvantaged by rural isolation and poverty. I have referred to relevant reading to support my work.

In the following chapter, in order to gain an understanding of the concept of identity, I explore theoretical perspectives of how this relates to the community and in answering the research question.

Chapter 2: who are Gypsies? – conflicting statements from policy

In this chapter, I discuss the cultural origins of Gypsies in Britain, and explore some of the major legislative polices penalising them, and their enforced settlement and the enforced social control (Sibley,1986; Halfacre,1996). I identify the complex (and frequently contradictory) ways in which legislation has sought to solve what society has seen as 'the Gypsy problem' which in fact has delineated who 'counts' as a Gypsy. I go on to explore the layers of discrimination that the Gypsy community continue to experience.

Chapter 3: Literature Review- Identity

In the first part of the chapter, I explore the concept of identity from a variety of perspectives. The question of identity is one of the major themes in Western philosophy; philosophers have continually questioned what identity 'is' and how it might be understood. 'Identity is defined by societal boundaries; social divisions both external to the person, and internalized and hegemonic' (Spencer, 2011:111). However, identity remains a contested concept in contemporary society (Bauman, 2004). 'Despite such seeming ordinariness and simplicity, identity is a very complex matter' (Austin, 2005:85).

In the second part, I discuss Gypsy identity and how this relates to those, who due to their location and social isolation, are disadvantaged having been forced to abandon their nomadic lifestyle. There is a strong sense that society does not value Gypsy culture, and the group clearly feel that they are seen as inferior. For this reason, many Gypsies often prefer to stay within their own network, and not fully integrate with mainstream society (Parry et al, 2007).

Chapter 4: Methods

This research is situated within the qualitative tradition. Qualitative research allows us to explore and understand better the complexity of lived experience (Dahlberg et al, 2008). Some of the ethical issues involved in a study of a qualitative nature are common to any form of research involving human participants. The primary aim of ethical considerations in research is to ensure that the goals of the research do not override the interests of the research participants. This study is underpinned by the four ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, justice and non-maleficence (Beauchamp and Childress, 2013) and the methods used gained approval by the University of Winchester. In addition, the anonymity of those participating was ensured by the use of pseudonyms and in hiding the location. 19 people aged between 18 – 85, all of whom identified themselves as Gypsies were interviewed, and 34 people participated in the workshops and contributed to the discussions; every participant gave their informed consent to either be interviewed, photographed or to participate in the workshops.

I first explore my use of the interpretivist approach, frequently attributed to Weber and his concept of 'verstehen' meaning understanding something in its context (Holloway, 1998:2). By using this approach, I aimed to gain an understanding of the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures as close to how participants feel it or live it (Kvale, 1996). I then go onto present the strategies for both generating and analyzing the data.

My interpretation and representation of the participants' perspectives, whilst aiming to stay as true to their accounts as possible are informed by my own observations and understanding of those perspectives and 'deeper theoretical insights that help to place the interpretation in a broader context' (Van Cleemput, 2007:139). The ethical considerations of working with marginalized groups are explored, and my approaches to managing the ethical dimension are explained.

Chapter 5: Presentation of findings

In this chapter I present the findings from the data generated by both the transcribed recordings of the interviews and the discussions which took place during the workshop group sessions with this Gypsy community, from a small village in the South of England. I explore the findings from the data generation, demonstrating how using a participatory approach has encouraged the enthusiasm and engagement of the participants. In the study, the Gypsy group expressed a strong sense of identity and of belonging to Gypsy culture. The analysis of the transcripts provided an enormous amount of rich, powerful and evocative descriptions on the ways in which this community express their identity. The respondents who spoke of trying to

maintain their identity emphasized the importance of Travelling, and several interrelated themes emerged from the material collected.

Chapter 6: Analysis of the artwork

Using art in the community is an important motivator, in particular, for isolated and vulnerable people. Using visual records in research adds texture and detail to interview situations and generally provides what has been termed 'extra somatic memory' (Prosser, 2000:69). 'Images can help to convey the subjective feelings, atmosphere and dynamics of the surrounding cultural and social spaces' (Spencer, 2011: 69).

The incorporation of self-made images by group members also created an opportunity for me, both as a participant in the art and crafts (learning new skills) as well as a researcher, to enter into the private worlds of the participants to which a researcher may ordinarily have no access. The data gathered from the workshops co-relate to those from the interviews; original quotations from the transcriptions of the interviews and discussions through the workshops, plus photographs of the competed artwork are used to illustrate the findings.
The conclusion of the chapter also serves to celebrate the work of the community by highlighting the contributions made by the study group, where they shared their traditions and heritage at an event to commemorate Gypsy Roma Traveller month with the wider community - which was an unexpected and very positive outcome.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In the conclusion I reflect on the findings and make suggestions for how this research could be extended. I go on to discuss the limitations of the study and make recommendations for the future.

CHAPTER 2:
Who are Gypsies and Travellers? – conflicting statements from policy

Introduction

Gypsies are among the oldest and yet most invisible minority ethnic communities in Britain (Clark and Greenfields, 2006).

> The term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is difficult to define as it does not constitute a single, homogenous group, but encompasses a range of groups with different histories, cultures and beliefs including Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, and Scottish Gypsy Travellers. (House of Commons Women's and Equalities Committee, 2018:5).

Despite the repeated enactment of draconian legislation (at times aimed at enforcing expulsion from the Kingdom on pain of death, imprisonment or torture) over the centuries, the Gypsy population has retained a constant presence in Britain (Greenfields and Smith, 2012).

In this chapter I explore some of the definitions of Gypsies and discuss their relationship with society over the course of their history in Britain. For the purposes of this study, I focus on the settled Romany Gypsies of the United Kingdom, introducing the reader to the subject of Gypsy traditions and origins and exploring relevant legislation and policy. Together with 'masterless men' (Beier, 1985: 5), over the centuries Gypsies have been faced with suspicion by mainstream society; today they continue to be subjected to persecution and discrimination. In this chapter, I discuss some of the major legislative polices penalising Gypsies, including their enforced settlement and social control (Sibley,1986; Halfacre,1996), and the various attempts to exterminate them (Mayall, 1988).

Gypsies have been part of every society across the world for centuries. They share one ideology, which is based on the desire to roam (Peacock 2010). The term 'Gypsy' encompasses numerous, culturally diverse groups of people (Peacock, 2008). Although there is no accurate or systematic national data collection on the size and nature of Gypsy communities, it is estimated that there are 5 million Gypsies living around the world *(ibid.).*

Although previously contested, it is now broadly agreed that Europe's Roma and Gypsy origins can be traced back to an Indian diaspora in the tenth century; Acton's argument that Gypsies travelled from India through many continents before arriving in Europe in the Fourteenth

Century is supported by the close links between Romany language and Hindustani (Acton 1997; Peacock, 2010). Being literate was not part of Gypsy culture until the 20th century (Acton, 1997), and traditions were orally shared across the generations, through storytelling and folklore (Adams, Okely, Morgan, and Smith ,1975). 'Through this process, myths have occurred' (
Okely, 1983:2).

The Early Years

'When Gypsies first arrived in Europe they were known throughout the continent as 'Egyptians,' having been believed to originate in little Egypt' (Taylor, 2014:11). The first definite records of them in Britain were in Scotland in 1505, and in England in 1514 (Smith, L., 2004), where they refer to an 'Egyptian' woman who could 'tell marvellous things by looking into one's hands' (Vesey–Fitzgerald, 1973:28). Sixteenth century legislation continued to provide a range of definitions, with descriptions of Gypsies, ranging from 'the Egyptians, to outlandish and undeserving felons' (Drakakis-Smith, 2007:468). 'Egyptians were generally seen as no more than vagrants and vagabonds, frequently 'lumped together' with idle vagrants' and subjected to stigmatization and subsequent criminalisation as a consequence (Mayall, 2004:25)

Across Europe, when groups of Gypsies arrived in a new city, they were initially welcomed by the local gentry and royalty and they were paid for playing music or telling fortunes; ' in the Scottish court in April 1505 there is a record of Gypsies being paid £7 at the request of the King' (Taylor, 2014: 19). However, since their arrival, they have also been the subject of persecution and discrimination, continually being faced with suspicion; 'throughout history there has been legislation to repress them' (Birthill, 1996:5). Despite overwhelming persecution Gypsies established themselves, 'finding niches in both town and countryside, sometimes being protected by landowners who found them useful as a supply of casual labour and for entertainment, and sometimes as a result of the inconsistent application of the law' (Taylor, 2014:76)

Over the centuries, attitudes towards Gypsies and Travellers 'have generated a powerful mixture of feelings' (Schiwy, 2016:12); since their arrival, they have been reviled and persecuted as 'the other'.

> Their treatment reflected majority society's deep ambivalence about the presence of Gypsies and their nomadic way of life. On

> the one hand it symbolised freedom from the responsibilities and duties associated with settled lifestyles – typified in folk songs such as 'The Raggle-taggle Gypsy'; on the other it provoked an almost visceral hatred, a suspicion that Gypsies could evade the law and the codes of behaviour that bound settled society to a place. (Taylor, 2014:47)

A characteristic of Gypsies and Travellers is their nomadic past. The tradition of nomadism, or 'travelling', is a 'central tenet of G/R/T culture, serving both their own economic survival and the purposes of society throughout history' (Phillips, 2017:7). 'In recent years there has been a steep decline in the ability of G/R/T groups to live a nomadic existence, so residing on permanent sites and in housing has become the norm' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:1). Today, the common perception that Gypsies are merely a 'social group of nomads, with no bona fide cultural values distinct from the host society, continues to undermine their identity' (Liégeois,1987:51; Peacock, 2008).The terminology of nomadism becomes problematic when seen as a fixed characteristic; so, for example, 'outsiders may believe that Gypsies and Travellers no longer belong to their ethnic group if they cease to travel for any reason' (Van Cleemput, 2007: 38). Since the mid twentieth century in particular, Gypsies and Travellers have been continually denied the ability to follow a nomadic lifestyle, yet in essence, they remain `nomadic' even when not travelling.

> Even when they `settle', Gypsies retain a nomadic frame of mind; the essence of travel is a 'folk memory' and as much a psychological need as an economic one. Over the centuries, it has been used as a convenient global term to divest indigenous groups of their land rights via policy around the world (Drakakis-Smith, 2007: 465).

State sponsored oppression has reinforced discriminatory attitudes and 'has provided an opportunity for the automatic and unrelenting prejudice shown toward G/R/T people living in Britain' (Allen, 2016: 8). 'A further fusing of the link between nomadism, itineracy and nuisance is evident across central government and local authority departments' (Phillips, 2017:7).

> Gypsy populations present a whole spectrum of situations, from the family that roams across Europe in long and wide caravans drawn by the most powerful cars, to the family mired in a shanty town, with no hope of ever getting out (Liégeois,1994:51).

'The romantic portrayal of 'true' Gypsies living a rural existence in horse-drawn wagons provides a template from which to denigrate Travellers who fail to accord to this image' (Sibley,1981, cited by Smith and Greenfields, 2013:13).

> These portrayals of Gypsy life are often preoccupied by paradigms of nomadism and a biological/hereditary nexus, focussing on these aspects of identity until members of those communities are beyond recognition as members of wider civic society
> (Belton, 2005: 46)

This dichotomy includes the romanticism of the 'proper' or 'deserving' Gypsy who lives in a nicely painted Vardo, attends horse fairs, tells fortunes and entertains with artistry and music by a campfire - and above all else who appears to symbolise the freedom and mystery of an earlier age; one where 'winding lanes led to a rural and idyllic Britain'(Clark and Greenfields,2006:281); the other dominant image is of the undeserving Gypsy or Traveller; the one 'who steals, is dirty, dishonest and who might even kidnap our children' *(ibid.).* 'The deep-rooted history of such dualistic stereotypes 'has not disappeared from public or political consciousness' (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:283). The cultural mythology of Gypsies reflects the wide range of simultaneous idealisation and denigration; on a positive side Gypsies are 'viewed as carefree and exotic, flamboyant and passionate musicians who travel the world, whilst on the negative side, as beggars and thieves, outlaws and vagabonds, swindlers, idlers and child snatchers' (Schiwy,2016: 12). Many people insist they have nothing against what they call 'genuine Romanies,' when these are the most nomadic of all Gypsies, suggesting that 'this acceptance is due to romantic 'fairy-tale' ideas' (McVeigh, 1997:54). Groups which are readily and easily stereotyped, such as Gypsies, are likely to experience layers of discrimination in their lives which lead to their entrenchment; they are much less likely to become members of the group which is active in the stereotyping or labelling, making it much more difficult to counter such representations with other realities. Unusually their position is that they don't fit in to the stereotype portrayed in art and literature as the 'true Gypsy' (Morris, 2000).

Legislation

As a people perceived to be without roots and without honesty, 'Gypsies were thought to be a danger to society, an affront to the state, and offensive to God' (Cressy, 2016:17). 'Throughout history there have been many efforts to eliminate their lifestyle and culture through the use of a variety of strategies' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:7) and policy and legislation. Gypsies have been the target of racial discrimination and outright genocide from the Middle Ages to the present day (Puxon, 1987:12). From the 16th century, Gypsies were blamed for problems of disorder, vagrancy, immorality and crime' (Cressy, 2018:12).

> Being blasted as rogues, vagabonds, thieves and sorcerers, Gypsies enjoyed ambivalent relationships with the communities through which they passed, being both loathed and feared for their pilfering but also patronised for their skills, including the telling of fortunes (Cressy, 2018:15).

These sentiments have led to punitive legislative policies which, over the course of many decades, have threatened to undermine their very existence as an ethnic group.

In the early 17th century, 'Gypsy culture remained mysterious and impenetrable' (Cressy, 2018:93). 'It is clear that leaders of early modern England did not know what to make of them, or what to do with them, though they were sure they were undesirable' *(ibid.).*

Date	**Acts specific to Gypsies**	**General Acts relating to nomadism, poverty and vagrancy**
1495 Vagabond Act		The Act required that officials arrest and hold 'all such vagabonds, idle and suspect persons living suspiciously' (Mayall, 1995:25). This Act had a very loose definition of vagabonds.
1520	Egyptians given 16 days to leave the country	
1522	Penalty for anyone to import Egyptians	
1530 England and Wales The Egyptians Act	The Egyptians Act was legislated in response to the Gypsies' nomadism, and their perceived proneness to criminality (Phillips, 2017:7). Henry VIII forbids Gypsies entry into England	
1536		**Vagabonds Acts** against valiant beggars and vagabonds punishable under death
1540 Scotland	Gypsies allowed to live under their own laws	
1553 England	The death penalty is imposed for any Gypsy not leaving the country within a month. Those who abandoned their 'naughty idle' ways were exempt	
1562 Vagabonds calling themselves Egyptian Acts	Gypsies in Oxford executed.	Provision of previous Acts widened to include people who live and travel like Gypsies.
1573 Scotland	Gypsies either to settle down or leave the country	
1601 The Elizabethan Poor Law	From 1625 – 1642 the government of Charles 1st continued the hard line against vagrants (Cressy, 2018:93).	Workhouses and houses of correction for those considered idle or vagrants were established
1650 England	Last known hanging for the crime of being a Gypsy	

Table 2.1: Anti Gypsy legislation

During the 16th century, Parliament began to associate 'Egyptians' with the larger social problem of persons being 'whole and mighty in body and able to labour who refused to work' (Cressy, 2018:63). In 1520, an Act was passed giving the Egyptians sixteen days to leave England. Gypsies who had been born in England could not be deported under these laws, and Smith believes that 'it is no coincidence that English names began to appear at this time with the purpose of Gypsies being able to prove their native status' (Smith, L., 2004: 96).

17th century

In 1601, the passing of the Elizabethan Poor Law saw the origins of the workhouse, prisons and houses of correction 'for those who were considered too idle, poor or vagrants'; from 1625 – 1642 the government of Charles 1st continued the hard line against vagrants (Cressy, 2018:93).

Along with the growth in agricultural capitalism, came a rise in inflation. In real terms, an agricultural worker now earned less than a third that they had done in the previous century. This saw the redistribution of wealth from the poor to rich (Tawney, 2012) With this, came an increase in vagrancy, and Gypsies again became the scapegoats (Acton, 1997). All redundant labourers could do was to migrate to whatever economic opportunities were available, and in between, beg for money.

18th century

Eighteenth-century English accounts continued to 'lump' Gypsies together with vagrants, although it appears that the state regarded them as a minor irritant rather than as a major problem (Cressy, 2018:117). They travelled about the country as horse-dealers, pot makers, fortune tellers and petty traders, and from the lack of court records, it appears they mostly stayed out of trouble (Smith, L., 2004). During this time, public society delighted in Gypsies, so long as they were 'romanticised, sanitised and artificial' (Cressy, 2018:142). From 1780, for a period of 150 years, National anti-Gypsy legislation was relaxed and gradually repealed (Smith, L., 2004).

19th century: Enclosures of common land

In 1816, the first National survey on 'the customs, habits and present state of the Gypsies', was undertaken. The survey revealed the common view that Gypsies were filthy and disgusting

with a 'depraved and fraudulent character', and as individuals 'who were in need of improvement' (Cressy, 2018:163). The report findings informed the Vagrancy Act of 1824, which then made it an offence to sleep rough; this Act was 'the most pernicious piece of legislation in the nineteenth century' because it did not consider the circumstances as to why an individual might be placed in such a predicament (Mayall, 1995: 147). In the nineteenth century, Gypsy life was affected by three main factors:

- the rapid economic change in Britain from an agrarian economy to industrial capitalism;
- the resultant urbanisation and other social changes facilitated (or forced) by industrialisation;
- land enclosures (Matthews, 2009:4).

Swathes of common land were enclosed between 1834 and 1849 and this process was accelerated again from 1871 to 1873; as a consequence, the area of common land potentially available as stopping places for Gypsies fell from 8 million to 2.6 million acres (Mayall, 1988:20).

The enclosure movement, and the 'passing of private Parliamentary Acts to facilitate it, began to accelerate, having a devastating impact on rural communities; many common lands were suddenly fenced off and if not retained by the local manor, were sold to the highest bidder' (L. Smith, 2004:146). This meant that the villager then had nowhere to graze their animals 'and many faced starvation at the stroke of a pen' (Smith, L., 2004: 145). Land prices increased so much that local people could not afford to purchase their own land and the balance of those living in rural areas began to change; 'no longer were all villagers interdependent on the good will and production of their Gypsy neighbours' *(ibid.).* 'As result of the Enclosures Act, nationally over 2,000 Gypsies emigrated, many to the United States' (Smith, L., 2004:146).

Dates	**Acts specific to Gypsies**	**General Acts relating to nomadism, poverty and vagrancy**
1824 **The Vagrancy Act**	This Act was the most pernicious act against Gypsies and Travellers in the 19th century because it did not consider personal circumstance and gave authorities powers to persecute Gypsies without going to trial (Mayall, 1995: 147)	The Act made it offence to sleep rough or beg – still in force in England and Wales.
1834 The Poor Law		The principles of the New Poor Law were never fully enforced. The position of the pauper must be 'less eligible', or less to be chosen, than that of the independent labourer. With the workhouse test, there was to be no relief outside the workhouse.

1876 The Commons Act 1876	Stopping places greatly restricted	Swathes of Swathes of common land were enclosed in separate Acts between 1834 – 1849 and enclosure of common land saw the potential o available stopping places fall from 8 million to 2.6 million acres

Table 2.2: 19th century legislation

With the evolution of the Poor Law in 1834, the issue of 'settlement' became less important, and yet vagrancy laws continued to have their impact. By the end of the 19th century, the responsibility for the policing of vagrants and those considered to be a public nuisance became the responsibility of the local authorities. Gypsies were accused of camping near to house dwellers, contaminating the water supplies, stealing, poaching and lighting fires with additional accusations of violence (Mayall, 1995). Gypsies were different from the general vagrant in that they had their own language (Romany) and traditions which separated them from the rest of the population (Beier, 1985:60).

> A distinct way of Gypsy life is perpetuated by two factors – firstly their social relationships with gaudjes are limited to types of relationship, primarily those of an economic or political nature.; secondly, a symbolic system and framework of rules exists which place that place the gaudje outside the groups' social and moral boundaries(Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 9).

This period saw an increase in the work of missionaries, whom (Behlmer, 1985: 236) describes as being bent on 'their conversion into sedentary Christians', 'calling upon wider society to give sympathy to whom they described as the 'unenlightened Gypsies' (Hoyland, 1816:104).

20th century

Date	Acts specific to Gypsies	General Acts relating to nomadism, poverty and vagrancy
1908 The Children's Act		The Children's Act 1908 makes education compulsory for travelling Gypsy children, but only for half a year.
1944 Education Act England	Gypsy children need only attend half a year. Many Gypsy children have no schooling	
1959 Highways and Byways Act		Travelling criminalised as overnight families not allowed to stay on the roadside. Travellers who had been allowed to stay on common land, were now forced settle on permanent sites or into local authority housing (Shelter, 1991:9).
1960 - Caravan Sites and	New sites are banned from being built in England. Mass evictions and	

control of development Act	public harassment of Gypsies and Travellers. This legislation saw common land again being closed to Gypsies and Travellers, creating a shortage of suitable sites. Community tensions arose when Travellers were forced by the loss of traditional stopping places, to stay on pieces of land deemed to be inappropriate.	
1968 Caravan Sites Act 1968	Councils are required to build sites A Gypsy was defined under this Act as a person of nomadic habits whatever their race or origin (Drakakis-Smith,2007).	
1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.	Local councils retained the power to identify land for private for purchase by Travellers and to provide sites (HMSO, Circular 1/94), yet the duty and grant aid to do so were revoked (Drakakis-Smith, 2007).	Legislation criminalised Travelling.
1998 Human Rights Act	Established Gypsies' legal rights under Article 8 of Schedule 1 of the Human Rights Act (1998. Protection under Article 8 applies to Gypsies on unauthorised encampments as well as those on authorised sites (Peacock, 2010).	The Human Rights Act 1998

Table 2.3: 20th century legislation

For those who wanted to continue to travel, there were fewer opportunities to do so, as expansions in towns and cities led to further planning and public health legislation, and once again, fewer stopping places. Unprecedented urban development led to many of the traditional places to stop becoming unavailable, due to the growth in motor traffic and the subsequent road widening schemes. Many of the larger Gypsy communities in Kent, Hampshire and Somerset began to move from travelling all year, to settling in the winter months 'whilst retaining the habit of travelling during the spring and summer months' (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). 'With the post second world war emphasis on rebuilding the nation, nomadic travellers were again seen as un-welcome' (Clark and Greenfields,2006:64).

The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (CSDA) was considered to be a first step to improve the condition of caravan sites by bringing them under local authority control, paralleling council housing. 'This Act did not explicitly refer to Gypsies but was aimed at controlling the continuing widespread use of unofficial caravan sites' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:18). 'This was an attempt to (re)house people who, due to the post- war

housing shortage, and out of necessity, had resorted to squatting or caravan/tent dwelling' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 19). The sites which so many people had settled on were subsequently deemed as unfit and were being requisitioned as they were now required for (re)development (Drakakis-Smith,2007).

In 1965, the Government survey of Gypsies' patterns of living was published under the title 'Gypsies and other Travellers'. Numbers in England [and Wales] were recorded as 15,500 (Clark & Greenfields,2006). However, due to the elusive nature of many Gypsies, and the fact that those who had been able to settle into bricks and mortar were generally not included, these figures are considered inaccurate and 2006 *(ibid.).* This research was the first ever attempt by a government in the UK at a comprehensive study of Gypsy lives and problems (Vesey-Fitzgerald, 1973:249). A key outcome of the report was the implementation of the Caravan Sites Act 1968, the main concern of which was 'the control of unauthorised encampments'. The Act stated that:

> It will be an offence for any person being a Gypsy to park a caravan for the purposes of residing in it on any occupied land without the owners' consent, on any unoccupied land, or on any land within the boundaries of a highway, for any period of time (Department for Communities and local Government, Circular 57/78, 2012).

Although the principles outlined in the Caravan Sites Act 1968 were to mandate the provision of sites, this was not successful (Phillips, 2017). Sites which were set up, were almost always in isolated areas, on the periphery of society, near rubbish dumps, sewage plants and major arterial roads (Kabachnik, 2009; Smith, L., 2004). 'Local hostility and complaints meant that more sites were closed than created, thereby increasing unauthorised encampments and mobility' (Drakakis-Smith, 2007:472). Gypsies struggled to gain planning permission for private caravan sites, despite the insufficient provision of both private and rented caravan sites (Van Cleemput, 2007; Brown and Scullion, 2010). Together with being frequently evicted from unauthorised sites, 90% of the Gypsy population were now living in conventional housing as a result (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). Current legislation thus questions whether living in settled accommodation removes the ethnic status of a Gypsy.

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA) 1994

There has in fact been a long tradition of members of society taking up nomadic lifestyles but the group calling themselves New Traveller group took on a more identifiable form in the 'alternative' and 'festival' movements of the 1970s (Earle, Dearling, Whittle, Glasse, and Gabby, 1994). The numbers of those who took up this lifestyle were swelled by the economic

crisis of the 1980s, 'and resulting urban decline and unemployment prompted some to experiment with new lifestyles' (Earle et al, 1994:54). In 1985, there was a crunch point between the police, the media and New Travellers at the 'Battle of the Beanfield' *(ibid.).* In response, the Conservative government introduced new enforcement measures against nomadism in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which impinged on the nomadic practices of all nomadic groups (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). The racist disciplining of Gypsy/Travellers was furthered by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA), 1994 which criminalized unauthorized residing on the land while removing the requirement for the local state to provide sites. This forced many Gypsy/Travellers into low quality social and private housing, often in economically deprived areas (Smith and Greenfields, 2012).

Phillips agrees that the 'racist disciplining' of Gypsies was furthered by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA) 1994 (Phillips, 2017:8). The intention of the Act was to make it much easier for the Police and Local Authorities to act against 'trespassers' or 'persons residing in vehicles' once they 'park up' anywhere other than on an authorised site *(ibid.).* Pressure from media, politicians and sections of the public campaigned for greater powers to be introduced to curb the growth and activities of Travellers (particularly New Travellers). Although the Act was intended to curb the number of illegal raves, protests and gatherings, Gypsies became caught up in its implementation *(ibid.).* Local authorities retained the power to provide sites yet the duty and grant aid to do so were revoked (Drakakis -Smith, 2007). The police and local authorities were given the powers to remove trespassers and impound vehicles which 'sent a very strong message to Travellers that they are unwelcome, marginal and deserving of the bare minimum' (Taylor, 2008:195). What site provision was made available encouraged cultural assimilation, reducing the opportunity for social integration with wider society (Belton, 2005). In addition, although the 1994 legislation invited G/R/T groups to purchase their own land, as some predicted, 'over 90 per cent of sites purchased by Gypsies would later be refused planning permission' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: ix). McVeigh captures 'the essence of anti-Traveller - ism, placing it in the context of an ideology of sedentarism, and essentially, anti-nomadism' (McVeigh, 1997:94).

Since the passing of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, 1994, what the Gypsy community would see as suitable accommodation has been increasingly difficult for them to access, given that the Act criminalised roadside encampments and removed the duty on Local Authorities in England and Wales to provide authorized sites. In 2003 there was a 'policy turn' when central government began to recognise the human impact and economic costs of constant evictions and disputes over instances of trespass (Greenfields, 2006c).

Date	Acts specific to Gypsies	General Acts relating to nomadism, poverty and vagrancy
2000 The local Government Act		Duties under the Act ensure that local authorities prepare strategies to promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area (Sibley, 1995)
2000 Race Relations Amendment Act	Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as distinct ethnic groups under the Race Relations Amendment Act, 2000.	
2002 Education Act	The word Traveller is defined in the Education Act 2002, as 'someone who is living in a caravan or has lived in a caravan within the last two years.'	
2004 Housing Act	Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 introduced a specific requirement for local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within their area. Consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters: a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.	
2010 The Equality Act	The 2009 Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report (EHRC) on Gypsies and Travellers noted that "the lack of suitable and safe accommodation underpins many of the inequalities that Gypsies and Travellers experience." This observation remains pertinent in 2015	

Table 2.4: 21st century legislation

Statutory Definitions of 'Gypsy' and 'Traveller'

Conflicting legal definitions of Gypsies in Britain have added to the confusion about Gypsy identity and origins over the centuries. 'Generally, it appears that identification has been connected to prevailing state ideologies supported by public-media/academic/political discourses which influence the process of exclusion, inclusion and marginalisation' (Drakakis-Smith, 2007:468). Definitions for Gypsies have a history, and complexity, of their own and have hardly altered with time. Different definitions appear in cases of equality, and in both housing and planning law, where for these purposes a Gypsy has to be a nomad (Peacock, 2010).

In 2004, the Housing Act Sec 225,2004, introduced a specific requirement for local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within their area. The statutory definition of Gypsies under the Act is: persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan; and all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:

> such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently;
>
> and
>
> members of an organised group of travelling show-people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such) (Department for Communities and Local Government,2012:9).

In determining whether persons are Gypsies, for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

- whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life
- the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life
- whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances' (Department for Communities and Local Government,2012:9).

As this legislation excludes those who have settled in bricks and mortar, the definition is therefore related entirely to nomadism (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). In September 2014, the coalition Government changed the definition of Gypsy for planning related purposes, excluding those who have permanently ceased from travelling. This change came into force from August 2015 following a revised version of Planning policy for Traveller sites being issued and defined Gypsies as:

> Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such (Equality and Human Rights commission, 2019; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2018; House of Commons, Women's Equalities committee, 2019).

The bi-annual caravan count began in January 1979 and is conducted on a particular count day by every local authority area in Britain. The Counts can be criticised for inaccuracies and the exclusion of Gypsies in housing, yet it represents the only nationally available information on numbers and trends and therefore, the data that does exist is fragmentary (Bhopal et al, 2000). Caravans lived in by 'Traditional and Ethnic Gypsies' along with members of the non-traditional 'New Traveller' groups who live in caravans or other moveable dwellings are included; yet surprisingly, information on the ethnicity or any other characteristics of caravan occupants is not collected (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2018).

The impact of Forced settlement

Due to restrictions of Gypsy sites policy, there has been an increasing shift from nomadism towards (forced) settlement. From the 1960s through to the 1980s, Gypsies were prohibited from living in particular places, in what Turner describes as a peculiarly English form of 'ethnic cleansing' (Turner, 1999:9). Once a local authority had achieved `designation' under the 1968 Caravan Sites Act indicating that `sufficient' pitches had been made available, this meant that Gypsies camping elsewhere within the authority borders, were committing a criminal offence. As a consequence, vast tracts of the country became out of bounds to them (Turner, 1999:9).

In so far as the Caravan Sites Act worked, the Gypsy/Traveller grouping became divided in the minds of mainstream society (and even in the minds of some Gypsies/ Travellers) into the settled (the Good) and the mobile (the Bad). 'The Good' were regarded as more deserving and thus more worthy of inclusion. The Bad were deemed undeserving and were not (Drakakis-Smith, 2007:473).

Many were forced into low quality housing, generally in economically deprived areas (Smith and Greenfields, 2012). The 1968 Act took much longer to take effect than was expected and was not adequate to accommodate the Gypsy population (estimated in 1991 as over 50,000), mainly because it was applied with varying commitment by different Local Authorities. The Government had stressed that its intention was to provide 'a network of sites on which the

Gypsies could continue their traditional way of life' (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1990:42). Despite this, and the fact that grant aid was made available for this purpose, only 60% of authorities had made any provision by 1990 (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1990).

> In addition to the often obstructive emotional and psychological impacts of settlement in housing, the ramification of such a dramatic change of lifestyle were widely regarded as violating the most fundamental aspects of Gypsy/Traveller identity (Smith and Greenfields, 2012: 124).

However, the lack of authorized stopping places means that housing is now likely to be the only option for most Gypsies. Initially the aim was for transient sites, as each district has an obligation to provide temporary stopping places (Smith, L., 2004). However, this is a long drawn out process which not only relies upon finding a suitable location, but also on achieving planning permission. As soon as any suitable land is identified, there are frequent oppositions to planning, with the 'not in my back yard' attitude of those living in the vicinity (Peacock and Herbert, 2014).

Bricks and mortar accommodation

One aspect of spatial management has concerned the control, surveillance and sedentarianism of Gypsy and Traveller communities, which has been enacted through making nomadism progressively more difficult to maintain and settle communities into permanent sites and housing (Belton, 2005, Richardson, and Ryder, 2012). Following the oppressive legal regimes of the twentieth century, families were forced into public sector accommodation in what Greenfields refers to as 'settlement policies' (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:112). Lack of secure tenure on public caravan sites, and anxiety that travelling for part of the year will result in having nowhere to return to, leads people to agree to reluctantly move into social housing instead. Many have turned reluctantly to 'bricks and mortar', no longer able to cope with the pressure of poor health, or the hardship of insufficient sites, repeated evictions or demands on their children's education (Smith, L., 2004). Being housed offers more security on one hand, yet the inability to pursue their traditions on the other:

For some participants, current poor health had precipitated a move into housing, although many felt coerced into this decision by additional circumstances, particularly the stress arising from being forcibly moved on from unofficial sites (Van Cleemput,2007:104).

The impact of forced settlement on Employment and Health

It is important to recognize that not all Gypsies suffer from economic exclusion (poverty), a high number, in fact, are highly successful entrepreneurs (Ryder, 2011). Professions vary in Gypsy communities, but the more traditional unskilled jobs are disappearing fast. 'Using their ability to adapt, many have turned themselves into tree surgeons or landscape gardeners' (Quarmby,2013:2), as casual work in the agricultural industry has dried up. Additionally, traditional jobs have disappeared due to the tightening regulations of the scrap-metal industry in 2013.

The 2011 Census data suggests higher levels of need among the Gypsy and Traveller community compared with the population as a whole, and they remain the ethnic group with the lowest employment rates and highest levels of economic inactivity (House of Commons Women's and Equalities Committee, 2019). Anecdotal and qualitative evidence, on the other hand, indicates that historically, Gypsies may have a cultural bias against claiming out-of-work benefits (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2019:4). Of those who were economically active, Gypsies, Travellers and Irish Travellers were more likely to be unemployed (20%) and self-employed (25%) than the general population in England and Wales. Over half of economically inactive Gypsies and Irish Travellers were either looking after the home or family (31%) or long term-sick or disabled (28%), and inactive Gypsies and Travellers are significantly less likely to be students or retired than the general population (House of Commons Women's and Equalities Committee, 2019:5).

Significance of the Vardo

Until the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, most Gypsy Travellers travelled in light carts or on foot, using bender tents to sleep in. The early 1800's, saw the development of the classic symbol of Gypsy travel in the form of a distinctive caravan, which replaced benders and tents in the first few decades of the century (Emsley., Hitchcock., and Shoemaker, 2018). It was in the 1880's that the common use of the flat cart, was developed into a wooden wagon or 'Vardo' – this is one of the most enduring icons of Gypsy culture is this brightly painted and ornately decorated wagon. The bow top, probably the most recognizable Gypsy caravan, was decorated in scrollwork and tongue and groove, and usually painted and decorated in tones of green, more easily blending into the woodland and could be hidden away when necessary (Smith, L., 2004). The classic curved design of the top is one of its most distinctive features. The designs used reflected the countryside through which the Gypsies

travelled and the status of the Gypsy family could be seen by the decorations on their Vardo; the more intricate the design, the richer the family were (Phillips, 2017).

Despite its iconic importance, the Vardo was only used in the United Kingdom for a relatively short period of time. This was the Gypsy's most prized possession as well as their home (Ward-Jackson and Harvey, 1973). 'The romantic view of Gypsy life has evolved with the Vardo as ethnic marker' (Drakakis-Smith, 2007:482). Despite only being used for around 100 years (and not by all Gypsies), the Vardo provided a sturdy form of accommodation, enabling families to 'follow the rhythm of the seasonal work on the farms, with the horse shackled at the front' (Smith, L., 2004:75). Based on the framework of the bender tent, the design incorporated a lightweight canvas top, supported by a wooden frame which continued to be used for sleeping. These wagons were pulled by horses and would provide accommodation for the adults and usually the youngest children, with the other children sleeping outside under tarpaulin. By the mid-19th-century the 'Vardo' was viewed as a symbol of 'freedom' and 'wealth' in Romani life.

For those who owned one, the Vardo was their most prized possession (Ward-Jackson and Harvey, 1973) as well as their home. However, the arrival of motorised vehicles from the early twentieth century meant that Gypsy/Travellers began to exchange their horse drawn wagons for caravans or trailers (Smith, L., 2004).

Just as some people believe that the body is merely a vehicle for the spirit on earth, the Vardo is believed by some to be the 'vehicle for the body on earth' (Ward-Jackson and Harvey, 1973). In the past, when someone died, their Vardo and most of their possessions were burnt because their 'vehicle for the body' no longer existed.

Attachment to the horse

Although domestic animals such as cats and dogs are considered to be unclean, horses are viewed by the Gypsy as being clean because they don't clean themselves (ie licking themselves all over) in the same way; so a man would drink from the same vessel as his horse but not one from his cat or dog. Although dogs are also highly valued, unlike other animals, the horse is seen as pure and unpolluted (Okely, 1983).

The strong attachment to the Gypsy horse originates from around the beginning of the 19th century, when Gypsies began to live in their Vardos (Smith, L: 2004). At first, mules and horses of any suitable breed were used as transport, and Gypsy horse breeding as it is today, began to take shape shortly after the Second World War. British Gypsies, both wanted and needed to

breed a horse which possessed the physical strength to pull their heavy wagons and 'to possess an even keeled temperament that would allow them to be safely handled, even by children' (Hallas-Kilcoyne, 2013:5). As all black horses were commandeered during the First World War, so Gypsies began to breed their own variety of coloured horse. Today, the horse is still considered an essential part of Gypsy culture, and almost a member of the family, symbolizing independence and nomadism (Okely, 1983). In the past, it was on the horse that the family's welfare depended *(ibid.).* Now, although, many people are unable to keep horses, they remain an important and key element of Gypsy/Traveller cultural heritage. Those Gypsies who are settled in housing are now unable to keep horses, as this applies only to those who live in circumstances where it is possible to care for one, and to those who have the financial and practical means to support the day to day living costs of horse ownership. The current relationship between Gypsies and their horses epitomises the profound changes that have occurred in the Traveller lifestyle in the course of one short generation. It appears that the Gypsy's attachment to the 'idea of the horse, can survive the indefinite absence of the real thing' (Le Bas, 2018: 72).

As many Gypsies engaged in the breeding, buying and selling of horses, trading was a major source of income. 'The horse is an important intermediary between Gypsy and gorgios as an item of exchange, and between Gypsies it has special significance as it affirms their identity and skills as Gypsies' (Okely, 1996:51). The ability to make a 'chop', and especially a 'chop' of horses, is an art to be learnt from childhood' *(ibid.).*

Gypsies and their contribution to the economy

Since their arrival, Okely highlights the fact that Gypsies have been dependent upon the Gaudje majority for their earnings; in terms of earning and financial self-sufficiency, Gypsies are directly dependent the majority community within which they circulate, supplying goods, services and occasional labour (Adams, et al,: 1975). In the 18th century, 'Travelling as horse-dealers, pot makers, fortune tellers and petty traders, Gypsies mostly stayed out of trouble' (Smith, L.,2004:92). Society delighted in Gypsies so long as they were 'romanticised, sanitised and artificial' (Cressy, 2018:142). In the late 1700s, 'a group of Gypsies afforded much entertainment at Lord Coventry's masked ball in York' (Cressy, 2018:144). In 1777, London theatre goers were entertained by a pantomime entitled the 'Norwood Gypsies' *(ibid.).* Then, for a further 150 years, anti-Gypsy legislation was gradually repealed with prejudice against them becoming more low-key (Cressy, 2018:117).

During the nineteenth century, Gypsy communities became more established and easily identifiable, and regular encampments could be found around the country (Matthews, 2009). During this time, the itinerant labour force played an important role in the provision of a range of services to remote rural communities and also urban house dwellers (Smith and Greenfields, 2013). Craft items of all kinds found a new demand (Smith, L., 2004). The backbone of the Gypsy family economy came from the selling of pegs, mats, flowers and baskets, chiefly undertaken by the women and children (Emsley., Hitchcock., and Shoemaker, 2018). In 1892, Griffiths identified that Gypsies (in areas of Hampshire) were known to be makers of all manner of goods such as tin ware, umbrellas, and chair bottoms; 'they watch the seasons and adapt to themselves to them, so, at Christmas time the men are busy making skewers for the butchers and clothes pegs, and in the summer they turn to making beehives and baskets out of grass and straw' (Griffiths, 1892: 62). This ensured that 'following the seasons in this way they were able to make a living' (Griffiths, 1892: 63). They became renowned for their dexterity and through their ability to manufacture a wide variety of small metal items such as rings, nails, knives, nails and other items made from tin, brass and copper they were able to earn a living (Mayall, 2004).

Trading and hawking from door to door met the needs for items that people could not buy elsewhere, especially in rural areas. Although some of the men would visit households to sharpen knives, 'In general Gypsy men would not go out selling; they would tend the horses, mend items such as pots and kettles, while the women, viewed as less of a threat, would knock on the doors' (Hoyland, 1816 :56). It was therefore the women who were at the forefront of the family economy, through knocking on the doors of strangers and at times being subjected to many forms of hostility in the process (Okely, 1983). 'Trading often meant 'they had to walk many miles, encumbered with heavy burdens and the inevitable baby' (Griffiths, 1892:63). Griffiths (1892) adds that as the men generally stayed at home to manufacture the goods, it was the women who were hawking from door to door and street to street; they would then dictate the movements of the family according to what goods were good or bad to market and therefore took a leading role in managing the family earnings.

Within a short period of time things were to change; the urbanization of society, advances in manufacturing and improved transport systems meant that many of the traditional way of earning a living were now redundant 'leading to the emergence of seasonal travelling patterns' (Smith and Greenfields, 2012:53).

During the 1914/1918 war, Gypsies again became a useful source of labour, with many employed as farm labourers, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, entertainers and showmen, moving on

from place to place to find work. They followed seasonal routes, fruit and hop picking across the country (Smith, L., 2004). These practical skills made the Gypsy community welcome, and for a period of some years they were able to live at peace with their house dwelling neighbours (Pateman, 2008). Gypsies brought value to the wider population at this time, for example in terms of the manufacturing handmade goods, facilitating repairs and providing entertainment services (Mayall, 2004). This contribution to society was unquestionably based on hard work, as for them 'the alternative was starvation and hardship' (Mayall, 2004:58). The post second world war years saw higher levels of acceptance for Gypsies and Travellers. Britain was being re-built; it had been a country 'devastated by 6 years of bombing and loss of life' (Clark and Greenfields, 2006: 64). After the Second World War the Gypsies' central role seasonal in fruit and vegetable harvesting was officially recognised (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:66).

The general consensus was that everything would return to 'normal'. However, by the middle of the 20th century, mechanisation in the farming industry had developed, so less help in more traditional farming methods was needed, and people no longer wanted handmade goods.

Prejudice and Oppression of Gypsies by Officialdom

Non-Gypsies or 'Gaudjes' have always regarded the Gypsy way of life with a combination of romantic envy, and feelings of mistrust, slightly fearing and disliking them, and viewing them as thieves, vagabonds and beggars (Mayall, 2004). From the early sixteenth century to the advent of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, the government have passed several significant anti-Gypsy statutes. In 1714 British planters and merchants applied to the Privy Council for Gypsies to be shipped to the Caribbean as slaves. In 1715, ten Gypsies in Scotland were deported to Virginia to the Americas (Smith, L., 2004). In the 21st century, there still remains what Mayall describes as 'harsh ambiguity' (2009:7), with Gypsies remaining the subject of intolerance and harassment at both a national and local level. The reduced need for handmade goods, and the dwindling income from this, has meant that both Gypsy women and men have needed to adapt their employment practices, either by becoming an employee, working on a self-employed basis, or by becoming dependent on the state for welfare benefits. Over the years, complaints and hostility towards Gypsies appear to centre on their refusal to adopt the wage economy and the subordination implied by it (Mayall, 2009).

Most Gypsies are now house dwellers. With increasing legislation, fewer places to stop and more traffic on the roads, 'against their repeatedly stated preference for caravan dwelling and site residence, the majority of the once nomadic Gypsy population are now

sedenturalised' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: xiii). Yet in society today the image of the 'real' or 'true Gypsy' persists, suggesting a past golden age of 'Gypsydom' *(ibid.).*

How Gypsies are perceived by contemporary society

Gypsies have little power to influence their image presented in the media, this applies more so than any other ethnic minority in the UK. 'Especially since illiteracy is a major issue for their community' (Morris, 2000: 215) many Gypsies and Travellers will be unaware of what is written in the press, as they may be unable to access what is written about them, 'so they are taunted, denigrated and laughed at 'behind their back' *(ibid.).* It is easy for the media and the press to sell the idea of the 'dirty Gypsy' when there is already a societal dislike of them, forcing them to live on the margins of society, 'under motorways, next to sewage works and railway lines, where no one else wants to live' (Morris, 2000:215). The fact that they are isolated and unable to access services to which they are entitled (i.e. health, education, decent accommodation) is rarely reported. Okely (1983: 232), adds that 'outsiders have projected onto Gypsies their own repressed fantasies and longing for disorder;' so, Gypsies 'represent the modernity of romance with its disappeared organic past'. Research in cultural studies has investigated why it was 'that different audiences decoded television programmes in different ways' (Rose,2001:194). Evidence confirmed that 'it was the socio-economic position of the audience members which shaped their reaction to the preferred meaning of a TV show' *(ibid.).* Morley (1980) stated explicitly that:

> Other things might affect it, in particular the audience members' involvement in different cultural frameworks such as a particular youth culture or membership of racial minorities (Morley, 1980: 23)

'these sorts of social positionings could explain why certain groups reacted in certain ways to the same programme' (Morley, 1980: 23). Clark emphasizes that there have been some positive repercussions from TV programmes and various spin offs, adding that there have been some unintended benefits which have arisen from 'the televised form of invasive door stepping, in that there has been an awakening for Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities, with a new generation of younger people having come forward as activists' (Clark, 30/11/2017).

Current Policy - Sites and Planning Applications

The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty for local authorities to prepare strategies to promote economic, social and environmental well-being of those living in their area (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). Yet public campaigns opposing Gypsy site provision, encouraged by negative media publicity, results in local authorities being forced to back down to public pressure. This is despite the fact that according to the duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act, 2000, they should be challenging rather than caving in to such opposition (Van Cleemput, 2007:107). The whole process of site clearance, securing land, the legal process for both local authorities and Gypsies is a financial burden to all concerned (Drakakis-Smith, 2007). Morris (1999) and Morris and Clements, (2002) estimated that site clearance and security cost local authorities in England in excess of £6 million per annum, with some local authorities spending more on eviction and securing sites against Gypsies than on making provision. Gypsy families with the finances to buy land and go through the expensive and protracted process of getting planning permission, are unable to develop private sites because of local prejudice and opposition (Morris, 1999). In most areas there is no shortage of land for sites, and yet approximately 95% of all private applications for Gypsy sites have been refused although 80% of all other planning applications are generally accepted (Friends, Families and Travellers, 2019). Delays between bidding for land and gaining planning permission means some Gypsies and Travellers set up sites before gaining planning permission, leading to enforcement of the planning decision and evictions from their own land, as in Dale farm, for example.

In 2012, The Department of Communities and Local Government announced the inclusion of Traveller sites in the New Homes Bonus to reward councils that deliver additional sites. The Department also secured £60 million Traveller Pitch Funding to help councils and other registered providers build new Traveller sites. Local authorities need to bid for this money and only those areas who are able to identify public or private land for the purpose of building a site (whether permanent or transit) would be eligible to apply. By 2017, fewer than a third of the required number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches in England had been built, with some funding currently unspent (Friends, Families and Travellers,2019). Local authorities have spent almost £35m creating 1,800 pitches since 2012, despite an agreed need for about 6,000. The Gypsy and Traveller Council argue that authorities are not living up to their legal or moral obligations (Peacock and Herbert, 2014: 6).

In 2012, the Coalition Government published a report, recognising that Gypsies and Travellers were being held back by some of the worst outcomes for any group, across a wide range of

social indicators (Department of Communities and local Government, 2012). The report identifies 28 commitments which target the following areas, including:

- Identifying ways of raising educational aspirations and attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children;
- Identifying ways to improve health outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers within the proposed new structures of the NHS;
- Encouraging appropriate site provision; building on £60m Traveller Pitch Funding and New Homes Bonus incentives;
- Tackling hate crime against Gypsies and Travellers and improving their interaction with the criminal justice system;
- Improving knowledge of how Gypsies and Travellers engage with services that provide a gateway to work opportunities and working with the financial services industry to improve access to financial products and services; and
- Sharing good practice in engagement between Gypsies and Travellers and public service providers.
- These commitments provide the context of social inequalities that are being experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (Test Valley Borough Council, 2018:18).
-

Current conflicting Policies

In 2019, the House of Commons Women's and Equalities Committee reported on the inequalities faced by GRT communities. The Committee did not set out to address issues relating to Traveller sites or encampments, 'but to tackle a wide range of other policy issues often eclipsed by issues of accommodation' (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2019:5). They evidence a persistent failure by both national and local policy-makers to tackle inequalities in any sustained way, leading to 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people feeling that they are, at best, ignored and, at worst, actively discriminated against in public services and policy making' *(ibid.).*The committee expressed their concerns that Government policy-making is overwhelmingly focused on planning and accommodation issues; they highlight concerns around unsustainable specialist support in education and health, which has become increasingly reliant on small, voluntary agencies. Trust is low between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and public services, due to historic and ongoing discrimination. While pockets of good practice exist, these tend to be driven by committed individuals developing creative solutions to overcome barriers. When individuals move on, the trust that has been built up dissipates, along with any progress that has been made (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2019:6).

Conversely, in February 2019, the Home Secretary Patel set out draft measures aimed at making it easier to intervene and remove Travellers from land they should not be on, making it

a criminal offence to set up illegal camps. In order to discourage travelling, the Government are also proposing to amend the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to:

- reduce the number of vehicles needed to be involved in an illegal camp before police can act from 6 to 2
- give the police powers to direct Travellers to sites in neighbouring local authorities. Currently they can only direct trespassers to sites in the same area
- allow officers to remove trespassers from camping on or beside a road
- increase the time - from 3 months to a year - during which Travellers are not allowed to return to a site they have already been removed from (Friends Families and Travellers , 2019, no page).

Currently trespassing in law is a civil matter, yet these government proposals 'make it a criminal offence for Travellers to stop anywhere without prior permission means that they are criminalising a whole ethnic group' (Friends Families and Travellers, 2019, no page).

The charity Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) noted that in addressing the government, Home secretary Patel has resorted to focusing on 'the behaviour of a minority, yet tar[s] all Gypsies and Travellers with the same brush' (Friends Families and Travellers, 2019, no page).

> Criminalisation of trespass would not make unauthorised encampments and nomadic Gypsies and Travellers disappear; it will however compound the stark inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers and raise serious questions about compatibility with human rights protections' (Friends Families, and Travellers, 2019:no page).

The Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government (DHCLG) announced it will provide local authorities with practical and financial support to handle unauthorised encampments, having committed to give councils up to £1.5 million of extra funding to help them enforce planning rules and tackle unauthorised sites. Yet although there is also funding available under the £4.7 billion affordable homes programme' to help local authorities to pay for legal pitches, in March 2019, no local authorities had used the funding to build sites despite evidence which demonstrates that currently there are 3,000 G/R/T families with no site to stop on (Friends, Families and Travellers, 2019).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored various aspects of who is a Gypsy, discussing some of their customs and traditions, alongside an overview of the legislation which has impacted on their ability to enjoy the lifestyle that it part of their heritage. I discuss the presence of Gypsies in

England and how they have adapted their customs and way of life in order to survive. Over centuries governments across Europe have repeatedly introduced methods in order to reduce the mobility of Gypsies and Travellers and enforce their settlement into either permanent sites or housing (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:8). In order to provide a comprehensive account, I have drawn upon the work of a variety of writers who have undertaken research with G/R/T groups. The impact of a sedentary lifestyle imposed by legislation, urban development and the reduced opportunities for traditional forms of employment has been explored.

In contemporary society, not just through legislation and policy, but also with modernisation, it is increasingly challenging to live the travelling lifestyle, and Gypsies have needed to change with the passing of time in order to survive economically. Modern trailers replace the wooden Vardos and bricks and mortar have replaced the trailer, not necessarily through choice. Conditions on the roadside for those who pursue a travelling lifestyle is one of continual oppression and harassment. Those families who do travel and who come into contact with the general public and the state, are no longer seen as Gypsies but as but as 'scruffy imitations' (Acton, 1997).

Even though legislation has been repeatedly introduced to restrict their mobility and forced them to settle into housing and permanent sites, G/R/T groups have clearly developed innovative strategies to mitigate the effects of this. As highlighted by Smith and Greenfields, (2013:7), 'the fact that the G/R/T community have survived these attempts and have maintained a sense of group cohesion is testament to their resilience'. The Gypsy community have proved they are resourceful and adaptable to change, and despite the governments' aims to assimilate them into mainstream society, and the effects of the imposition of legislation which intended to force them to abandon their culture and tradition, they should be recognised an important part of contemporary society. 'It is also true that by keeping themselves apart, Gypsies aim to protect themselves and their unique identities' (Myers, 2017:224).

In response to a joint report submitted by a coalition of organisations working with G/R/T groups, on 7th May 2020, the United Nations (UN) committee for the international covenant on civil and political rights announced that they will be investigating the UK government on its compliance in upholding the rights of GRT communities in the UK. The UN have asked the government to report on discrimination in relation to health, education, housing and the over-representation of Gypsies and Travellers in the criminal justice system. According to the

Equality and Human Rights Commission the UK will submit its response by April 2021 (Friends Families and Travellers, 2019).

Friends Families and Travellers (2019), add that it is vital that G/R/T communities across the UK are heard by Human Rights bodies like the UN and that the hope is that this action will put pressure on the government to take immediate action to address these issues which have been left unaddressed for too long.

In the following chapter, I discuss the nature of identity

Chapter 3: Identity Theory

Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature on social identity theory and go on to explore how this is understood in relation to Gypsy identity.

Identity remains a contested concept in contemporary society (Bauman, 2004). 'Despite such seemingly ordinariness and simplicity, identity is a very complex matter and is seen from a variety of perspectives' (Austin, 2005:85). The language of 'identity is ubiquitous in contemporary social science, cutting across psychoanalysis, psychology, political science, sociology, and history' (Stryker and Burke, 2000:284). There are various ways in which identity is considered; for example, some theorists link the meaning of identity to the culture of people, whilst others such as Tajfel (1982) refer to identity as being a social category, as in social identity theory. Other ideas relate to the roles we each play in different aspects of our lives and how we see ourselves; for example, as a mother/wife/employee/white woman, and to the meanings we attach to the various roles we play in contemporary society (Butler, 1993). So, in this theory, identity is conceived as being the combination of multiple factors: - age, gender, sexuality, status and person hood, and in addition, the choices we make construct the person we are (Butler, 1993). Ceyhan argues that 'Gender is socially constructed and institutionalized in the fabric of race and class' (2005: 20).

In understanding the identity of individuals, 'it is essential to explore the social context in which human behaviour takes place' (Ali, 2013:45). The representations of different groups in society, contribute significantly to the manner in which identity is constructed (Butler, 1993). Social identity then, is central to our sense of self (Spencer, 2011:110). It is the categorization of the self as a unique entity, distinct from other individuals. The individual acts in terms of his or her own goals and desires, rather than as a member of a group or category. 'The level of identity that is activated (the personal or the social) depends on factors in the situation, such as social comparison or normative fit, which make a group identity operative and override the personal identity' *(ibid.).*

'A set of people in a community or social setting will be associated by both themselves and others with the characteristics of their group, with this then becoming for the individual who joins it, a dominant group' (Austin, 2005:11). There is an assumptive aspect of identity, where 'the individual assumes an identity, claims it for her/himself based on a feeling or perception of commonality with others' (Rutherford, 1990:4). So, identity is also to do with the way an

individual will answer the question 'Who am I?'. This is not purely a psychological question, but is also a social question, because it concerns not just us on an individual basis, but also the groups with which we identify. This involves an element of choice, a degree of individual agency where the person decides why they want or do identify with the group (Woodward, 2004).

In turn, Gypsy and Traveller identity remains a complex subject, attracting much discussion. 'Through centuries, the external labelling, definitions and stereotyping of Gypsies in Britain have both reflected and contributed to their persecution and marginalisation' (Okely,1983:66). Misleading descriptions by the government, service providers, the media, local authorities planning departments through to academics, continue to be frequently quoted; for example, at a Health and Wellbeing meeting in South-shire in 2014, (McCaffery,2014:376) an English Romani Gypsy was described as representing 'travelling communities'. This description is aligned with the popular view of Gypsies and Travellers as a 'single homogeneous group who constantly travel, establish unauthorised encampments and disrupt the settled community' (McCaffery, 2014:377). However, British Gypsies are by no means a homogenous group: some are nomadic, whilst most others are settled. Terminology in this area, including 'Gypsy' and 'Traveller', is somewhat contested, has varying connotations and is often used interchangeably (Kenrick and Clark, 1999: 19; Clark and Greenfields, 2006:11). 'Gypsy and Traveller identity is not a one dimensional social or ethnic type ... but complex and ever changing ... as ideas and people themselves adapt to, develop and incorporate their environment over time' (Belton, 2013: 39).

Acton (1997), argues that research into specific groups of Gypsies needs to acknowledge that there are various ways in which people express their Romany identity, including through prioritizing different livelihoods and customs. 'Gypsies use the principle of descent as a self-ascriptive mechanism for continuity; this restricts entry into the group and offers the means for its survival' (Okely,1983:67). In order to be known as a Gypsy, a person must have at least one parent who is of Gypsy origin (Rehfish,1975; Okely, 1983:68), and membership ascribed at birth must be affirmed by a way of life and commitment to certain Gypsy values (Okely, 1983:69).

Particularly in the last 15 years, a variety of research has identified the increasing gap between the health, educational, and social needs of Gypsies and Travellers and the wider community, evidencing that Gypsies remain among the most socially excluded and marginalized of all minority ethnic groups (Hawes and Perez, 1996; Van Cleemput and Parry, 2000; Van

Cleemput, 2007; Bhopal 2011). Paradoxically, many researchers also argue that the discrimination faced by Gypsies and Travellers derives largely from the legislation which was originally framed to assist them (Van Cleemput and Parry, 2000).

Gypsy identity

It is clear that non-Gypsies or Gaudjes have always regarded the Gypsy way of life with a combination of romantic envy, coupled with deep feelings of mistrust, always fearing and disliking them. For centuries people have viewed them as thieves, vagabonds and beggars. Society appears to have little knowledge or interest in the history or culture of Gypsy communities, who are often viewed with suspicion and distrust by mainstream society, with as Bhopal argues 'an historic feeling of dividedness, and a non-crossable borderline between Gypsy culture and non-Gypsy culture' (Bhopal and Myers, 2008:1).Negative discourse and 'othering' are more prominent throughout society in application to Gypsies and Travellers than to other marginal groups (Powell, 2008:92). Belton and other writers believe that Gypsy identity is created and maintained not only by tradition and hereditary factors, but also by the sociological, political and cultural forces which have 'created the ethnic narrative that is Gypsy identity' (Belton, 2005: 10).

This extensive range of pressures on Gypsies to conform to a sedentary way of life, alongside wider social transformations, has resulted in a mixture of adaptation, evasion, conformity and conflict (Mayall, 1988). Gypsies and Travellers remain a largely hidden community in mainstream consciousness and in part this invisibility is used as a protective strategy by the community, to maintain their distinct culture and heritage and prevent assimilation into the sedentary society (Liégeois,1994; Powell, 2011). The folklore surrounding the origins of Gypsies and Travellers results from stories they have used to protect themselves and their distinct cultural identity to prevent assimilation into the sedentary society by being 'settled' (Liégeois,1994).

'The core of an individual's identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role and incorporating into the self the meanings and expectations associated with the role and its performance' (Stets and Burke, 2014:10). 'Sociological social psychologists see persons as always acting within the context of social structure in which others and themselves are labelled in that each recognizes the other as an occupant of positions or roles in society' (Stryker, 1980, cited by Stets and Burke, 2014:10). From this perspective, one assumes a role identity, and consequently merges the role with the person (Tajfel and Turner, 1978). When we identify ourselves in a specific category (white, female, middle aged, heterosexual, for

example) we are also simultaneously saying what we are not; so, not black, male, young or gay. 'In the act of coming to represent self, we project the other, that identity or thing that is not us' (Austin, 2005:11).

Self-categorization, that is, identifying oneself as a member of a particular social grouping, is considered by Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004), to be a basic element of group identity. Measurement of ethnic identity must begin with verifying that the individuals being studied self-identify as members of a particular group. Much of how we see ourselves is 'merely a reflection of the ways in which the rest of the world sees us' (Austin, 2005:9). The internalised images we have of ourselves originate from those which are also externally viewed by us. If we are repeatedly served up negative images of ourselves, for example, it is likely that we will come to accept these as 'natural' and respond accordingly. Stereotyping therefore (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) is based on a normal cognitive process, with the intellectual tendency to group things together. In doing so, there is a tendency to exaggerate: -

> 1) the differences between groups
> 2) the similarities of things in the same group
> (Tajfel and Turner, 1986:24)

And so, people are categorised in that way. Members of a group see themselves as being different from others, and members of each group may see themselves as being more similar than they really are. Such categorization is one explanation for the unfounded prejudice and discrimination we see in cultures and individuals.

Members of an in-group will tend to:

- favour the ingroup over the outgroup
- maximize the differences between the ingroup and the outgroup (it is necessary to maintain that the groups are distinct if a person is favouring their group over the other)
- minimize the perception of differences between ingroup members (this increases ingroup cohesion)
- remember more positive information about the in-group and more negative information about the out-group

(Tajfel, 1978:24)

A sense of 'invisibility' also helps to maintain Gypsies' marginalisation and perpetuates the levels of misunderstanding, thereby creating a dichotomy of views, ranging from the historic and romanticised notion of a nomadic lifestyle with horse drawn wagons in country lanes, juxtaposed against the more recent stereotypical view of 'dirty' and 'dishonest' people living in illegally parked caravans (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). The reality is in fact, a marginalised community who have experienced a long history of prejudice and discrimination dating back to the sixteenth century. Indeed, it should be noted that power is constructed and Gypsies and

Travellers are never powerless; their independence and tactics and strategies bear this out (Okely 1983; Sibley 1986). 'The point is that they are on the wrong side of an unequal power balance' (Powell, 2008 :93).

Social identity theory

Tajfel's (1978) theory assumes that individuals strive for a positive social identity; they seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group from a comparison out-group on some valued dimension; even without competition, people tend to favour their in-group, over their out-group.

Social identity can be defined as a person's knowledge that they belong to a social category or group (Hogg and Abrahams 1988), a set of individuals who view themselves as members of this same group. Through a social comparison process, persons who are similar to the self are categorised with the self and then become labelled as the 'in group.' Persons who are different are categorised as the 'out group' (Stets and Burke, 2000). 'Social identity and power positions of both groups reflect their self-images, their main values and beliefs, and their perceptions of their relative positions and power balance with respect to each other' (Korostelina, 2014:216). Having a particular social identity means being 'at one' with a social group, being like others in the group and seeing things from the group's perspective (Stets and Burke, 2000). Some people have a clear sense of commitment to their group; others feel confused and conflicted about their membership of the group, in terms of their ethnicity. Some have strong positive emotional ties to their group, whereas others wish they belonged to a different group. Some people are highly involved in their ethnic or cultural heritage and its customs; others show little or no interest in it or feel that ethnicity is not important in their lives. These attitudes and behaviours may change over time and have important implications for the ways in which individuals live their lives, interact with people from other groups, and view society as a whole (Phinney, 1990).

Belonging to the group contributes positively to a sense of social identity, and this will determine how and if an individual will remain a member of the group. If the group fails to satisfy this requirement, this individual may:

- Try to change the structure of the group (social change)
- Seek a new dimension of comparison by which to enhance a sense of positive social identity (social creativity); or
- Leave the group or distance himself from it (social mobility)

(Tajfel, 1978:25)

Individuals are not entirely determined by society as they are able to 'strategically manipulate the social situation and others' impression of themselves' (Ceyhan, 2005:29). Goffman points out that:

> Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way...when an individual projects a definition of the situation and implicitly or explicitly claims to be a person of a particular kind, he automatically exerts a moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect.
> (Goffman, 1963:24).

However, there is a dilemma in relation to the Gypsy community and their resulting social exclusion as a result of their stigmatised identity. Although social participation is vitally important to identity and in turn to psychological and social survival (Bartley, 2004), Gypsies are aware of the hostility towards them from society, as they experience racial harassment and discrimination in all areas of life. Failure to be granted the opportunity to choose how and where they live is viewed as just one further consequence of this hostility. Van Cleemput's research identified that 'A perceived policy of social assimilation via accommodation and education was seen by many as a threat to their culture and identity as Gypsies and Traveller' (2007:107). 'The state has continued to oppress the Gypsy population through policies which have eroded cultural practices such as nomadism and the pursuit of traditional employment opportunities' (Powell, 2008:118). The outcome of this is that as Gypsies are not accepted by society, they have withdrawn into their own social group and distanced themselves from the wider community (Tajfel, 1978).

Culture and identity

'Culture is composed of psychological structures by means of which individuals or groups of individuals guide their behaviour' (Geertz, 1973:11). There are two distinct ways of thinking about cultural identity; 'firstly, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experience and shared culture of our history' (Hall and Hall, 1990:222). The second position recognizes that there are points of difference; 'what we really are, or since history has intervened, what we have become' (Hall and Hall,1990:225). 'Cultural identity is a matter of self-ascription and ascription from others in interaction' (Barth, 1969:7). Culture has come to be seen as something people construct in their daily interactions. In many ways, those shared characteristics are what, from some perspectives, constitutes culture *(Ibid.).* Hall and Hall believe that we should think of cultural identity as a 'production which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within non representation' (1990:222). In this way,

the process of identity formation is 'continuous and links to the material cycle of production and consumptions and other representation through language, media and other cultural signs' *(ibid.).*

The past experiences of minority groups are 'those of discrimination and oppression, exercised by dominant regimes, for example through colonization and the attempts of colonial powers to normalize' (Hall and Hall, 1990:226). In the Western world, what is alien, is presented as 'otherness, the site of difference and the repositioning of our fears and anxieties' (Rutherford,1990:10). The second development of the concept of culture has been into what some might call micro social groupings: 'we read of the culture of the street gang; of the touring rock band; of gangster groups; of social and corporate interests' *(Ibid.).* 'Culture determines how members of society think and feel: it directs their actions and outlook on life and defines accepted ways of behaving for members of a particular society' (Ali, 2013:42). 'The concept of identity is closely related to the idea of culture. Identities can be formed through the cultures and subcultures to which people belong or in which people participate' (Ali, 2013:44).

> 'In terms of authenticity, if we create a culture that our descendants will want to hold onto, our culture will continue to survive in them; we have in our power (to some extent), to make our children into the kind of people who will want to maintain this culture' (Taylor, 1989:159).

So, it is through socialization, that individuals learn about the culture of their society. The importance of the family in a Romani child's life is mentioned in many studies conducted throughout the world. It is also a subject raised frequently by Romani families; in most Gypsy communities the family and the extended kinship network are the primary influences in a Romani child's life (Okely, 1997: 247).

Features of Gypsy identity

In terms of Gypsy identity, 'nomadism, self-employment, close knit family relations, community languages, customs, rituals and taboos (linked to cleanliness and pollution), are central features' (Hawes and Perez, 1996:9). Distinctive economic or labour market practices and of kinship networks (Kenrick and Clark, 1999) also remain an essential aspect of Gypsy identity. Although with the passing of time some of these traditions are being eroded, it is through a need to 'belong' and the sense of being able to relate to these ancestral and cultural

links, together with the practice and/or ideal of nomadism which is seen as a constant in the self-definition of Gypsies (Brown and Scullion, 2010).

Gypsies are usually visibly identified with caravans, although mobility is no longer their defining characteristic. The ability of Gypsies to maintain a mobile lifestyle, key to their definition in law, has become increasingly difficult as UK planning legislation has reduced the number of places where Gypsies can legally stop. Work patterns have also changed in recent years and many Gypsies have been forced to adapt to by following employment routes which do not require a nomadic lifestyle.

Shubin and Swanson (2010) and Van Cleemput (2007) highlight the fact that an ability to travel is a central tenant of Gypsy culture and at the heart of their self-identity. Throughout this study, participants expressed their wish to be nomadic and being able to travel, even for short periods (see chapters 5 and 6). They felt the ability to do so was increasingly being denied to them, due to the ever-evolving legislation which prohibits travelling (Okely, 2012) and the lack of stopping places. This sense of loss of freedom, combined with relative isolation, compounded by a loss of control over the situation, is a crucial factor affecting the emotional health of Gypsies (Van Cleemput, 2007:176). Although opportunities for travelling are now more restricted, nomadism is still as much about the possibility of travelling as about the state of mind of travelling itself (Le Bas, 2018). Gypsies in the UK themselves argue that although nomadism may no longer be a feature of the Romany lifestyle, it is a pervasive way of seeing the world, rather than simply the physical act of moving (Liégeois, 1994). Lack of access to services and education have also affected Gypsy patterns of travelling. Some Gypsies have become part of the settled community and have successfully integrated with non-Gypsies. On the other hand, many have been forced to live a sheltered life, marrying within extended family groups and not having the desire or ability to break away from their 'own' community, where they feel they belong. Those who have settled into bricks and mortar, are still keen to stress the ancestral pattern of nomadism, and many say that one day they may return to the road (Liégeois, 1994; Peacock, 2010).

Gypsy identity and education

For decades Gypsies and Travellers have experienced widespread discrimination in the educational arena. Many Gypsy children are excluded from attending school due to the inaccessibility and unavailability of schooling that is appropriately tailored to suit their background, lifestyle and linguistic abilities (Peacock, 2010).

'Evidence confirms that there are high levels of deprivation experienced by G/R/T children in terms of household economic activity, housing, education, and health and that children from these communities are the most at risk of failure in the education system' (Save the Children, 2001:3). The term Gypsy/ Traveller is defined in the Education Act 2002, as 'someone who is living in a caravan or has lived in a caravan within the last two years' and those who have been housed for over two years are not seen as a minority group, but are regarded as part of mainstream society' (Drakakis - Smith, 2007: 466).

Children from Gypsy communities attain and progress significantly below the national average throughout compulsory education. In 2017, 11% from Gypsy backgrounds attained GCSEs in English and Maths at grade 4/C or above, compared to 64% of pupils national; Gypsy and Traveller pupils also have a high rate of school exclusions and report high levels of bullying and racial abuse (House of Commons, 2018:8). Inclusion in education has frequently taken the form of special provision (Drakakis-Smith, 2007: 468). The Swann report (1985), identified Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils as being strongly affected by many factors; particular mention was made then, as now, of racism and discrimination, myths, stereotyping and the need for more positive links between Gypsy/Roma/ Traveller parents and their children's schools (Department of Education and Science, 1985)

As Bhopal (2011) found, many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in schools have experienced racist abuse and other forms of bullying. These negative experiences contribute to poor attendance rates of these pupils in school and their marked underachievement (Department of Education and Science, 1985). Some G/R/T pupils respond to insults and racial slurs by displaying negative behavior, resulting in disciplinary action on the part of the schools as a consequence. Insults are low-intensity aggressive actions that are perceived by the insulted side as intentional and illegitimate (Felson, 1982). Gabriel defined an 'insult' as a 'behavior or discourse, oral or written, which is perceived, experienced, constructed and, at times, intended as slighting, humiliating or offensive' (1998:133). In 2007, school census data evidenced that G/R/T children and young people had the highest percentage of exclusions compared to all other groups *(Ibid.).* At the school and pupil level, it is evident that children who are confident about their personal and community identity are much better placed to be happy and successful learners; the notion of positive self-worth is therefore a major determinant of learning success (Department of Education and Science, 1985).

Stereotyping Gypsy identity

One of the clearest indicators of disadvantage is that the economic and social exclusion of this particular group is compounded by a lack of empowerment and social inclusion. There are few easily accessible specialist support services available to this group and in Hampshire (unlike many other counties), there is no Gypsy led advocacy service. In fact, there is open opposition of Gypsies, often shared in the media and other forums. Together with this growing resentment from the media, research in the last 15 years has identified the increasing gap between the health, educational, and social needs of Gypsies and Travellers and the wider community. A variety of research evidences that even today, Gypsies are among the most socially excluded and marginalized of all minority ethnic groups (Hawes and Perez, 1996; Van Cleemput and Parry, 2000; Bhopal, 2011). Paradoxically, many researchers also argue that the discrimination faced by Gypsies and Travellers derives largely from the legislation which was originally framed to assist them.

The persistence of stigma in relation to British nomadism runs so deep that the Commission for Racial Equality (2006), and the Women's Equalities Committee in 2019, have concluded that Gypsies and Irish Travellers are still the most excluded group in Britain today. Discrimination as experienced by Gypsies is related to their opposition as outsiders in a sedentary world. Stereotyping is a negative product of the mental process carried out by people in order to categorise or divide people into groups, based on preconceived characteristics (Morris, 2000). So, stereotypes are created to serve as a substitute for 'standing in for what is real' (Morris: 2000:215). We know that stereotyping individuals and groups ultimately leads to racism, because most racism consists of reducing a particular racial group to particular, stereotyped representation. It becomes dangerous when people use stereotyping as a way of simplifying complex things, or people, in order to deal with what frightens them or with what they do not understand or know about (Morris, 2000:216). She adds that when people go on to learn from the media or the press about the people of whom they are afraid, this only confirms their 'reductive assumptions and encourages them to continue in this simplistic and sometimes prejudicial thinking' (Morris,2000:216).

The discrimination and racism experienced by Gypsies is related to their opposition as outsiders in a sedentary world. 'Dominance, inequality and injustice, are often maintained by reference to stereotypes, and stereotypes are therefore significant obstacles to the development of anti-discriminatory practice' (Thompson, 2001:29). Most racism consists of reducing a racial group to, stereotyped representation. 'Stereotyping is a negative product of the mental process carried out by people to categorise or divide people into groups, based on

preconceived characteristics' (Morris, 2000 :215). 'So, often people who are significantly different from the majority are frequently exposed to the 'them' rather than 'us' and this binary form of representation'; so, stereotypes are created to serve as a substitute for 'standing in for what is real' *(ibid.).* Stereotyping individuals and groups ultimately leads to racism, because most racism consists of reducing a particular racial group to stereotyped representations. When people go on to learn from the media or the press about the people of whom they are afraid, this only confirms their 'reductive assumptions and encourages them to continue in this simplistic and sometimes prejudicial thinking'*(ibid.).*

In the past, Gypsies were an ethnic group whose appearances were strikingly different, and whose way of life resembled that of vagrants, another persecuted marginal group (Mayall, 2009). Many Gypsies report being marginalised and bullied in relation to their being 'dirty' which Bhopal refers to in her research as 'white racism' (2011:326). Whereas whiteness is also understood as a supremist identity, 'the white identity of Gypsy children was seen in the opposite light to those who are considered clean, acceptable members of society; the 'white' identity of Gypsies is seen as being 'unclean, distant and alien to other members of society' (Bhopal, 2011: 327). Stigma in relation to British nomadism, runs so deep that Gypsies (and Irish Travellers) remain the most excluded groups in Britain today (the Commission for Racial Equality, 2006). 'This stigma is not just confined to Britain but is mirrored across much of Europe, with similar dynamics of marginalization and exclusion reproduced across different spaces' (Bancroft, 2005, cited by Powell, 2008:88). It seems that 'Gypsies have become a subclass because they have been placed there by another culture which fears them' (Powell, 2008:90).

Determinates of poor health

The combination of discrimination, social isolation and lack of community participation are all contributory factors in determining Gypsies' accommodation and health status (World Health Organisation, 2006). Van Cleemput (2007) highlights that the social environment and the exclusion resulting from a person's social position produces direct psychological effects that influence wellbeing and are implicated in other causes of morbidity and mortality. 'Key statistics on diabetes', reveals the 'shocking reality for people living in deprivation, which is strongly associated to the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and the risk of serious complications amongst those already diagnosed with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes (Diabetes UK, 2009). Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include being of South Asian origin; having a family history of the condition; or originating from an ethnic minority group *(ibid.).*

Peacock and Herbert, 2014, together with the report on the health and social needs of Gypsies in Hampshire (Peacock, 2010), found that the inability to control or influence housing conditions was a significant factor for the prevalence of anxiety or depression and yet also identified that the small sample group who were nomadic, experienced less stress and anxiety than those who were settled on authorised sites or in housing (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). Poor accommodation has long been recognised as an important wider social determinant of health. The term 'housing' in the broadest sense as described in a ministerial conference on Environment and Health: 'the conjunction of the dwelling, the house, the environment and the community' (Bonnefoy, 2007: 411). Accommodation is referred to here as being suitable and adequate shelter and is not just seen yet not simply as a roof over one's head. Having an adequate home is shown to provide many psychosocial benefits, and satisfaction with their dwelling is a strong predictor of wellbeing in individuals (World Health Organisation, 2006). Housing is still seen by the government as a way of improving life circumstances of those Gypsies who are nomadic or living in temporary situations such as unauthorised sites and roadside encampments. Paradoxically, research evidences that Gypsies living in houses or on local authority sites are significantly more likely to be suffering from a long-term illness than those on a private site or unauthorised site or those following a mobile lifestyle (Parry et al, 2007; Peacock, 2010). In particular, this includes psychological problems attributed to the lack of mobility and loss of traditional mobile lifestyle. Greenfields (2006c:15) concurs with this view suggesting the reason for this is 'cultural dislocation, in which the change in cultural lifestyle, aversion to bricks and mortar, loss of mobility and often being separated from close family members promotes feelings of isolation'. 'This isolation from the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community is often exacerbated by experiences of prejudice and discrimination causing isolation from the sedentary community as well as fear of social integration' (Rogers, 2016: 63). The incompatibility of conventional accommodation with traditional lifestyles and cultural practices provides a further marker by which housed Gypsies and Travellers distinguish themselves from their neighbours, 'we're not born to the houses we're raised to live in trailers' (Greenfields and Smith, 2010: 26).

For many, adapting to life in conventional housing is a difficult adjustment. The constraints of living in housing; the loss of close-knit community ties; physical isolation and loneliness can lead to the breakdown of physical and mental health (Parry et al, 2007; Matthews, 2009). Unlike the community in this study, many do not remain living in 'bricks and mortar' accommodation for long (Davies., Grant., and Locke, 1993). Despite opportunities for travelling being much more restricted, nomadism is as much about the possibility of travelling as about the state of mind of travelling itself (Le Bas, 2018). Gypsies in the UK themselves

argue that although nomadism may no longer be a feature of the Romany lifestyle, it is a pervasive way of seeing the world, rather than simply the physical act of moving (Liégeois, 1994).

Ethnicity

The word ethnic is used to refer to groups of people who are considered to have a shared identity, a common history and a traditional cultural heritage (Barth, 1969:5). Some groups are more powerful than others and often those who are less powerful become classified as minorities (Woodward, 2004:134). 'There is an argument that less powerful groups seek to improve their social position, making their social identity more positive in relation to the more powerful group' (Woodward, 2004:132). How identities shape people's lives depend on how they are viewed by others and as a result of the social construction of the meaning and value ascribed by the majority to these identities.

The Gypsy's tale of their affinity, heritage, lineage and belonging is a response to their marginality. Browne (2008) argues that individuals are not free to adopt any identity they like, and factors like their social class, their ethnic group and their gender are likely to influence how others see them. For some Gypsies, their identity as a Gypsy will be grounded in ethnicity, for others it may be tradition, occupation, and/or culture (Brown and Scullion, 2010) The identity that an individual wants to assert and which they may wish others to see them having, may not be the one that others accept or recognize.

For Barth, the cultural content of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be one of two orders:

1. Overt signals or signs – the features that people tend to look for and exhibit to show their identity such as dress, language, house forms or general style of life
2. Basic value orientations – the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged (Barth, 1969: 22).

Gypsies are not easily distinguished by their individual features in their appearance such as dress, skin colour or facial features (Matras, 2014). 'Several characteristics may serve to distinguish 'them' from 'others', such as language, history or ancestry, religion and styles of dress or adornment' (Giddens and Sutton, 2013:677).However, in contemporary society, many people from ethnic groups (such as Gypsies) have adapted their style of dress, either to fit in or simply through choice, with modern fashion being more accessible to them. This, in particular, is relevant to the housed Gypsy community, some of whom choose to 'blend in' with their neighbours, presumably to not draw attention to themselves and in order to be accepted. As

Barth (1969) observed, ethnic distinctions do not depend on the absence of social interaction and acceptance: on the contrary they are quite often the very foundations on which social systems are built (Barth, 1969:6). Interaction in such a social system does not lead to its liquidation, but through change and acculturation, cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence *(ibid.).* Therefore, the mistrust, fear and rejection of mainstream society have contributed to the formation of certain Gypsy and Traveller cultural identities (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). The external restraints placed on interaction with a 'pariah group' such as Gypsies and Travellers have helped to maintain the strong boundaries between Gypsies and Travellers and wider society (Barth, 1969: 10). Parkin identifies 'a type of closure mounted by a group in response to its outsider status and the collective experience of exclusion' (1979:74). When this involves minority groups who lack the industrial strength of organised labour, 'outsider groups' rely heavily on social and expressive forms of collective mobilisation; 'these tend to be based on defensive pride and solidarity that raises the self-esteem of the group members' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:137).

Ethnicity refers to a particular way of defining not only others but also ourselves. 'Ethnic identity and ethnic origin can be defined as the sense of individual that he/she belongs to a particular cultural community' (Ceyhan, 2005:7). Ethnic identity has been conceptualized as a complex construct including a commitment and sense of belonging to one's ethnic group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in activities and traditions of the group (Phinney, 1990). It is a matter of social organisation above and beyond questions of empirical cultural differences; it is about 'the social organisation of cultural difference' (Barth, 1969:6). Hutchinson and Smith make a definition of the term 'ethnic' as 'a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members' (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996:6, cited by Ceyhan, 2005:8). 'Ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves' (Barth, 1969:10).

For ethnic identity to be fully understood, it needs to be considered in relation to the prominent group identity as part of their own national culture. Ethnic identity is a form of social and 'is part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel, 1982: 255). Ethnic identity has been conceptualized as a complex construct including a commitment and sense of belonging to one's ethnic group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in activities and traditions of the group (Phinney, 1990).

In anthropological literature, the term ethnic group is generally understood to designate a population which is:

1. Largely biologically self-perpetuating
2. Share fundamental cultural values realised in overt unity in cultural forms
3. Makes up a field of communication and interaction
4. Has a membership which identified itself and is identified by others as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order (Barth, 1969:9).

So, ethnic groups are seen as a form of social organisation, where members categorise themselves and others for the purposes of interaction (Barth, 1969:10) and also as a means of segregation. According to Jenkins, identification is the ''production and reproduction during interaction of the intermingling, and inseparable, themes of human similarity and difference'' (Jenkins, 2004:94). That is, who we are is as much dependent on who we are not. It is a cognitive and emotional process in which people increasingly come to experience others as similar to themselves (De Swaan, 1995). A key aspect in the dialectics of identification is the ability to distinguish, to recognize similarity and difference – categorization (discussed above) being one such means by which we make sense of ourselves and others (Powell, 2008:96). For the Gypsy community differences include a preference for self-employment, and respect for pollution taboos 'which express, at a ritual level, the separation from Guadjes, although self-ascription as Gypsies includes specific cultural choices as well as the principles of descent' (Okely, 1983:67). Gypsy communities outside of the research group may have alternative customs and codes. However, all the Gypsies participating in this study expressed a strong sense of Gypsy identity and of celebrating Gypsy culture, wishing to be known as Romany Gypsies.

As minority group members explore the history of their group in the context of mainstream society, they may become increasingly aware of the racism and discrimination experienced by other oppressed groups. This knowledge is often accompanied by feelings of anger toward the dominant group for past and present wrong doings (Phinney, 1990). Individuals in this stage may feel greater empathy for members of other minority groups who have shared the experience of oppression, even though these feelings can be in conflict with their strong in-group attitudes (Atkinson et al, 1993). At the final stage of Phinney's table of ethnic identity, minority individuals develop a secure, confident sense of themselves as members of their group. They feel secure in their own ethnicity and are assumed to hold a positive, but realistic, view of their own group. Although they are comfortable with their group membership, ethnicity may or may not be salient to them as other aspects of their lives may become more important. Individuals at this stage have abandoned anger toward the majority group and may be generally open to other groups (Cross, 1991).

Stage	Relationship to own group	Relationship to other
Unexplained ethnic identity (diffusion or foreclosure; preencounter)	Positive negative or neutral depending on socialisation (in family, community)	Positive, negative, or neutral depending on socialisation. Possible White identifcation
Moratorium or exploration (immersion/emersion resistance)	High involvement, high salience; typically positive attitudes but swings of mood	Increased awareness of racism; possible anger towards Whites and empathy for other minorities
Achieved ethnic identity (Internalisation)	Secure sense of group membership; realistic appraisal of own group; salience may be high or low.	Can vary from acceptance and positive involvement (integration) to preference for separatism as rational approach to discrimination

Stages of Minority Group Ethnic Identity; Implications for Attitudes Toward Ones' Own and Other Ethnic Groups – [Phinney's table is used on the basis that the majority group is white]

Table 3.1: stages of minority group identity - adapted (from Phinney, 1990:272)

Belonging, kinship and family

Kinship is a fundamental part of how groups comprehend their identity which may be an imaginary connection, though none the less powerful for that (Woodward, 2004:301). The importance of people in forming a sense of place and identity has been discussed by anthropologists working amongst Gypsy communities all over the world. Writers such as Stewart 1997: 28, and Gay-y-Blasco,2016: 641, have noted how people are not considered 'properly Gypsy' unless they are linked into a network of relations which ascribe to this identity. In this way, being part of close extended family network in an otherwise hostile world, is a major feature of Gypsy Traveller culture. Greenfields highlights the significance of family to all Gypsy groups:-

> Families stress the importance of children being raised with the whole community as a way of ensuring that young people are educated in appropriate cultural practices, as well as developing a clear sense of their social and ethnic identity (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:43).

High importance and significance are placed upon the 'closeness of the extended family' (Acton, 1997:90), with kinship being of particular importance to the Gypsy community primarily as form of support network 'playing a major role in mutual assistance' (Okely,

1983:80). This may involve only one or two families; however when the need arises, such as in the case of a death or serious illness, extended families become more involved in the network; an example of this is when someone is taken ill and admitted to hospital, where there will be a constant presence of visitors (Smith, L. 2004). The aim is to 'recreate the notion of belonging and to ensure one's fellow Gypsy is not alone with the Gaudje majority' (Dawson, 2000:6). Family support networks include extended family, religious and community supports (macrosystem), in turn these will be influenced by the overarching socio-cultural contexts within which the family live (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

The similarities in protective factors, albeit in a broader socio-economic context illustrate the interdependence between individuals, family and community structures (Rogers, 2016:110). These similarities are not surprising given that some community structures, as with Gypsy and Traveller communities, are essentially extended kinship family communities (Rogers, 2016). Hence shared beliefs and values, a sense of belonging and communication are fundamental to both family and community resilience. In terms of kinship, Gypsy and Traveller childhood has retained a more family orientated character in comparison to the wider community (Powell, 2016:143). This, according to Powell, is due to the function of the group who feel the need to protect 'in the face of external hostility and stigmatization' (Powell, 2016:143). Additionally, it is crucial to the transmission of culture, the passing on of traditions and for the preparation of young people for their role in that continuing 'intergenerational process' (Powell, 2016:144). The uneducated 'notions of a lack of morals, dirt, violence, deviance, laziness, illiteracy and racial purity ('real' Gypsies) have all been used to justify discriminatory responses to Gypsies and Travellers and explain their continual stigmatization' *(ibid.).*

Parry et al (2007) comment on the attitude to children within the Gypsy community, which may be seen as 'old fashioned', but is still current; that is that children are a genuine gift to the community, that 'they are our children, they are what we are and that they are the future' (2004:199). When babies are born into Romani society they are considered to be signs of prestige, good luck and God's blessing to the family; they are accorded special care during their first 6 weeks of life when they are considered to be ritually impure and in danger of illness (Okely, 1983).

So, it is clear that children are highly valued and central to Gypsy family life, benefiting from being part of strong nuclear families and also of wider kinship and community structures (Okely, 1983). A child's identity is shaped by the norms, values, and behaviours of the culture

in which he or she is raised. In Romani Gypsy society socialisation occurs via the extended family network.' This network provides Romani children with emotional and physical support' (Okely, 1997:243). This central place of children means that they are included and participate in many aspects of adult life more than they may be in broader society. Allen identified in his research that early childhood experiences of being a 'Gypsy' reinforced the cultural identity of the respondents, and this created what he describes as 'an indelible imprint' which cemented an understanding of how their cultural identity was unique (Allen, 2012).

'Community plays a crucial symbolic role in generating people's sense of belonging' (Crow and Allan, 1994:6). Having a sense of belonging and experiencing relationships of trust that are involved, brings significant benefits (Putman, 2000). Belonging to the community suggests the members have something in common with each other, i.e. their Gypsy identity, and the thing held in common distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other possible groups; this is the case with the way that the Gypsy community celebrate cultural practices such as for example, death (Cohen,2014).

'Boundaries are drawn socially and controlled by the state, such as for example, retirement age, citizenship or the legal status of families' (Best, 2005, cited by Spencer, 2011:110). Communities are seen as symbolic constructions, in which a system of values, moral codes and norms provide a sense of belonging within a bounded whole to their members. The symbolism in a community may be explicit in that they can mark certain events such as life and death and the pure and the polluted (Cohen, 1982). The community is where one learns how to be social in that this is where individuals acquire their culture. Hence within a community, principles are established whereby anyone contravening these will be perceived as an 'outsider' (Cohen, 2003). Rites and rituals are one way in which communities are able to create a symbolic boundary *(ibid.).*

Self-identification is explored by a number of writers as a way of proposing Gypsy ethnicity/identity (Okely, 1983: 72-3). The identity that an individual wants to assert and which they may wish others to see them having, may not be the one that others accept or recognize, which is particularly true of Gypsies. In terms of their 'insider' identity, their identity has come from within their own culture; whereas outsider identity refers to how the wider community are viewed from within that culture. This helps to promote a sense of belonging and community. Sharing of a common culture is generally given central importance to the group (Barth, 1969:11). When non-Gypsies use the term 'Gypsy', however inaccurately, 'the Gypsies' consciousness as a separate group is constantly re-affirmed from the outside' (Okely,

1983:66). Outsider status is one of discrimination and a lack of belonging to wider society, which creates the desire for self-segregation, and this then leads to further marginalisation. In understanding the identity of individuals, 'it is essential to explore the social context in which human behaviour takes place' (Ali, 2013:45). The representations of different groups in society contribute significantly to the manner in which identity is constructed (Butler, 1993). Social identity then, 'is central to our sense of self' (Spencer, 2011:110). It is the categorization of the self as a unique entity, distinct from other individuals. The individual acts in terms of his or her own goals and desires, rather than as a member of a group or category. 'The level of identity that is activated (the personal or the social) depends on factors in the situation, such as social comparison or normative fit, which make a group identity operative and override the personal identity' *(ibid.).*

'A set of people in a community or social setting will be associated by both themselves and others with the characteristics of their group, with this then becoming for the individual who joins it, a dominant group' (Austin, 2005:11). There is an assumptive aspect of identity, where 'the individual assumes an identity, claims it for her/himself based on a feeling or perception of commonality with others' (Rutherford, 1990:4). So, identity is also to do with the way an individual answers the question 'Who am I?' This is not purely a psychological question, but is also a social question, because it concerns not just us on an individual basis, but also the groups with which we identify. This involves an element of choice, a degree of individual agency where the person decides why they want or do identify with the group (Woodward, 2004).

Identity, evolves through the process of socialization and is about how individuals or groups see and define themselves, and how other individuals or groups, in turn, see and define them. In social identity theory, identity is formed through the influence of social institutions like the family, the education system and the mass media (Browne, 2008). 'Boundaries are those markers of difference which delineate the contours of our sense of identity, between self and others, between us and them' (Spencer, 2011:110). These may be social boundaries as well as those which are controlled by the state, a factor which is particularly relevant to the G/R/T community. The Romany Gypsy community in this study see themselves as a separate group – however within this wider group there are also individual factions. So, as was reported by this study group, those living on sites do not always see those in housing as being what they term 'real Gypsies', exacerbating their feelings of exclusion (Peacock and Herbert, 2014). Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory explains that part of a person's concept of self comes from the groups to which that person belongs and from this perspective, 'an individual does not just

have a personal selfhood, but multiple selves and identities associated with their affiliated groups' (Tajfel and Turner, 1986:8). The individual assumes a role within this group and others to which they belong and may behave differently in varying social contexts. Social identity can be defined as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel, 1978: 63). So, belonging to a group 'provides people with a sense of their distinct place in the social world' (Sindic and Condor, 2014:43).

> Membership of groups consensually regarded as superior will confer a *positive* social identity, and conversely membership of groups consensually regarded as inferior will confer a *negative* or *unsatisfactory* social identity, which may, under certain conditions, motivate the members of those groups to take collective action towards challenging the existing social hierarchy and the inferior status conferred to their group (Sindic and Condor, 2014:43).

As already highlighted, research indicates that G/R/T groups have always been considered to be of an inferior status. This results in Gypsy groups demonstrate a preference for self-segregation as a form of self-preservation. Tajfel and Turner (1986), highlight three processes that create ingroup/outgroup mentality:

- **Social Categorization.** First, we categorize people in order to understand and identify them. By knowing what categories, we belong to, we can understand things about ourselves, and we can define appropriate behaviour according to the groups that we and others belong to.
- **Social Identification.** We adopt the identity of the group that we belong to, and we act in ways that we perceive members of that group acts. As a consequence of the individual's identification with that group, he/she will develop emotional significance to that identification, and their self-esteem will be dependent on it.
- **Social Comparison.** After we categorize ourselves within a group and identify ourselves as being members of that group, we tend to compare our group (the ingroup) against another group (an outgroup). 'To maintain your self-esteem, you and your group members will compare your group favourably against other ones'

Table 3.2: ingroup/outgroup mentality, Tajfel and Turner, 1986: 20.

Personal identity

Society is influenced through the actions of individuals through the creation of groups, organizations, networks, and institutions. Reciprocally, society influences individuals through shared language and meanings that enable a person to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction, and reflect upon oneself as an object. The latter process of reflexivity constitutes the core of selfhood (Mead, 1934, cited by Stets and Burke, 2014:1). As Hornsey (2008), illustrates,

> The motivating principle underlying competitive intergroup behaviour is a desire for a positive and secure self-concept; if we are to accept that people are motivated to have a positive self-concept, it flows naturally that people should be motivated to think of their groups as good groups (Hornsey, 2008:207).

In modern society, individuals think and feel that: 'I am here, entirely on my own, all the others are out there, outside me and each of them goes his own way, just like me, with an inner self which is his true self; his pure 'I' and an outward costume, his relations with other people' (Elias, 1991:35). It is only through establishing our own identities and learning about the identities of other individuals and groups that we come to know what makes us similar to some people and different from others, and therefore form social connections with them. How people see themselves, will influence their choice of friendships, the communities and groups to which they relate and belong (Browne, 2008: 36). The identity of individuals and groups also involves both elements of personal choice, and the responses and attitudes of others. Individuals are not free to adopt any identity they like, and factors like their social class, appearance, gender, sexuality and their ethnic group are likely to influence how others see them. 'Complex aspects of identity, belonging and difference, are expressed and acted upon at the individual level, but also mediated and regulated discursively through key social institutions and the media' (Spencer, 2011:110). 'Man, to a special degree, is a social being, dependent on the society of other people' (Elias, 1991:35).

Jenkins defines 'an individual's reflexive sense of her or his own particular identity in relation to others in terms of similarity and difference, without which she/he would not know who they are' (2004 :49). 'A person's identity is not formed in behaviour, nor in the reactions of others, but in the ability/capacity to sustain a particular narrative' (Giddens, 1991:55). 'Gypsies themselves use the principle of descent as a self-ascription mechanism for continuity' (Okely, 1983:69).

'In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and where we are going' (Taylor, 1989, cited by Giddens, 1991:54). People do not only interact with others but interact symbolically with themselves as well. Symbolic interaction is accomplished through the use of language. Feelings of self-identity are both fragile and robust. The former because the biography the individual reflexively holds in mind is only one story among many other potential stories, and robust because a sense of self is often securely enough held to enable the individual to weather the many tensions and transitions which will come his way (Giddens, 1991). 'The context of self-identity, the individual characteristics from which biographies are constructed varies both socially and culturally' (Giddens, 1991: 56).

One of the central ideas of social identity theory is the individual's need for a positive identity, which can be achieved by a comparison between groups. Identity is 'that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group, together with the emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel, 1978:2). A social group provides individuals with particular social status, protection and security, emotional and cognitive certainty, and positive self-esteem (Korestelina, 2014:216). Tajfel and Turner (1986) proposed that there are three mental processes involved in evaluating others as 'us' or 'them' (i.e. 'in-group' and 'out-group'). These take place in a particular order.

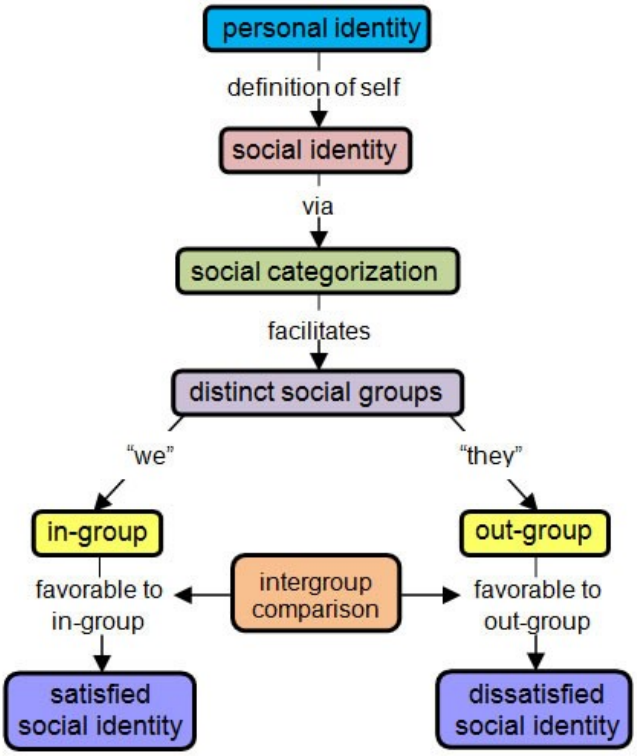


Figure 3.1: intergroup identity Tajfel and Turner (1986:7-24)

So, individual identity is not just based upon one's ideas of self and interpretation of this; one's group membership also plays a major role *(ibid.).* Memberships or collectives such as racial origin, colour, ethnicity, country, culture, education, work, status and family are all key aspects of social identity theory, which in turn shapes the individual to who they are. Social Identity theory is based on 4 main concepts: -

1. The first order is that of categorization – where we categorize people (including ourselves) in order to understand the social environment. If we can assign people to a category then that tells us things about those people, we define appropriate behaviour by reference to the norms of groups we belong to although of course an individual can belong to many different groups.

2. In the second stage is category accentuation effect – where the difference between intergroup differences and intragroup similarities is exaggerated.
3. The third stage is social identification – where we adopt the identity of the group we believe we belong to. There will be an emotional significance to our identification with a group, and our self-esteem will become bound up with group membership.
4. The final stage is social comparison. In this we compare our group with others to make sure we are able to compete favourably with them). This is where the concept of 'others' originates. If our self-esteem is to be maintained our group needs to compare favourably.

Table 3.2: Tajfel and Turner, 1986:23

Once two groups identify themselves as rivals, they are forced to compete in order for the members to maintain their self-esteem. Competition and hostility between groups is thus not only a matter of competing for resources (Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

Identity development

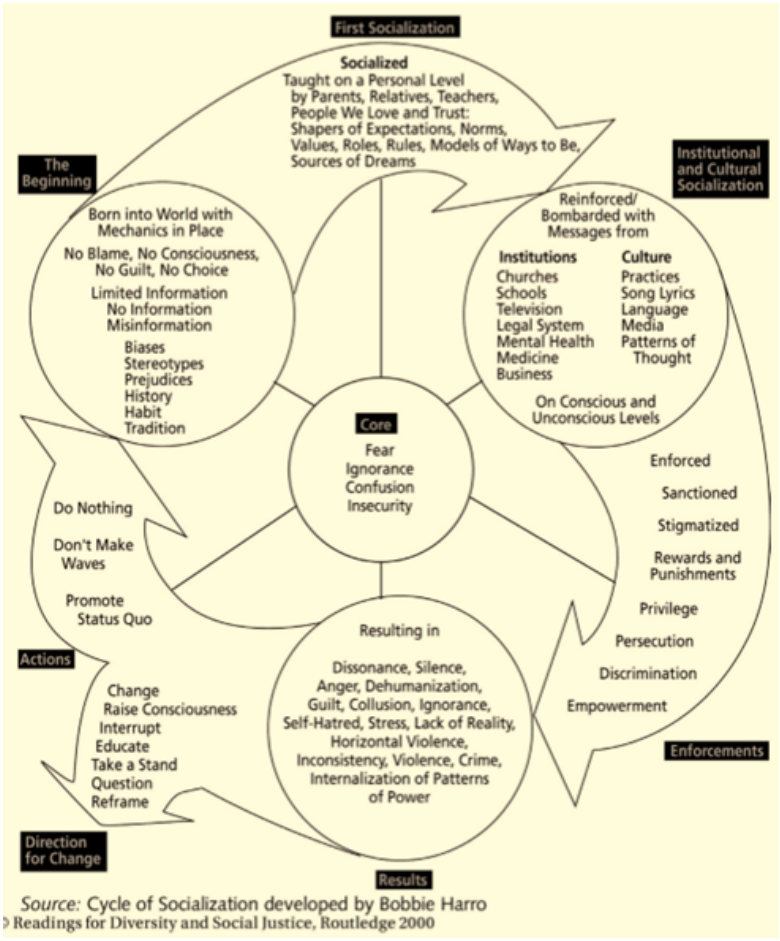
Continuity of a survival group such as Gypsies is seen 'in the passing down of legends, history, music, and cultural values' (Elias,1991:224). Much of what has happened in past generations that has lived on in the collective memories, in the we- image of the group. Both as an individual and as members of various groups, 'our present existence is powerfully shaped by recollections of the past and anticipation for the future' (Hinchman and Hinchman, 2001:1). 'Memories are individual and collective, the result of shared experiences (Hammersley,1992). There is a tendency for us to think of writing as the basic form of language, and yet oral speech underpins all verbal communication; 'Sustained thought in an oral culture is tied to communication' (Ong, 1982:33).

Another element of identity development is the continuity of memory (Elias, 1991). Individual memories help us to retain the knowledge gained as we pass through life phases. Our personal experiences in earlier life can control feelings and behaviour in later phases; 'the greater the scope for differences in the experiences engraved in the memories of individuals in the course of social development, the greater the chance of individualization' (Elias, 1991:187). Belonging can be understood in various ways – for example in relation to family, ethnicity, class, traditions and through communal shared memories. Being able to position oneself and others through shared memories is the strongest element of belonging in a variety of studies. 'Communal memories of the past help to create a sense of community, both in the present and in the future' (Bhabha, 1994:55)

Mutual identification and a shared history – together with persistent stigmatisation and hostility from outside the group also play a central part in reinforcing the sense of 'shared

culture' inside the Gypsy group (Powell, 2016). Spatial separation (for example ghettoization and educational segregation) supports the maintenance of physical, social and emotional distance (Cretan and Turnock, 2015). In this way the 'self' becomes at the centre, whilst those that are seen as 'other', that 'repository of our fears and anxieties' is relegated to the margin (Rutherford, 1990: 10). In the process of separation, the next stage is the fear of difference which then becomes exclusionary and leads to discrimination. Difference becomes immersed into various exclusionary and discriminatory discourses in what Austin describes as the 'alienating and separating process, and material practices, such as racism, sexism, and class prejudice' (Austin,2005:11).

Ontological security and individual identity



Source: Cycle of Socialization developed by Bobbie Harro
Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, Routledge 2000

Table 3.3: cycle of socialization Harro, 2000:16, cited by Adams et al, 1997

Harro created the cycle of socialization which represents how individual identity develops, and how 'we get systematic training in how to be in in each of our social identities throughout our lives …from which sources it comes, how it affects our lives and how it perpetuates itself' (Harro, 2000:16). Harro argues that this socialization happens both interpersonally (how- we think about ourselves), and interpersonally (how we relate to dependent on our caregivers and have not as yet developed the ability for independent thought and others)' *(ibid.).* Messages

such as 'boys don't cry' are transmitted to us by the people raising us. We are dependent on our care givers and at this stage have not as yet developed the ability for independent thought and decision making.

Our identity in terms of our gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, and where we live, are ascribed to us at birth, 'through no effort or decision or choice of our own' (Harro, 2000:5). In fact, 'Our socialization begins before we are born, with no choice on our part' *(ibid.).* Harro's argument is that an individual is born into the world without any consciousness of who they are (Harro, 2008). 'The new-born child is no more than a preliminary sketch pf a person' (Elias, 1991:22). Socialisation begins before birth which is outside of the new-born baby's control; so, there is no choice in this process. At birth, the individual person may be very different from others through their natural circumstances; 'it is only though society that the small child, with its malleable and relatively undifferentiated mental functions, is turned into a more complex being; so only in relation to other human beings does the wild, helpless creature become the psychologically developed person with the character of an individual' (Elias, 1991:21).

> On top of these givens, we are born into a world where all of the mechanics, assumptions, rules, roles, and structures of oppression are already in place … we have nothing to do with constructing them. There is no reason for us to feel guilty or responsible for the world into which we are born. We are innocents, falling into an already established system (Elias, 1991:21).

As a child develops through childhood, those social identities into which they are born, predispose them to the unequal roles which exist in the 'dynamic system of oppression of society' (Harro, 2008:45). It is not always possible to 'ignore' the negative messages that are seen in these rules, structures and assumptions which surround us because there are enforcing mechanisms in place which maintain them (Harro, 2008:26). For example, 'it was through social movements such as the feminism, gay rights and black activism, which pushed issues of difference into the spotlight' (Rutherford, 1990:33). 'The struggle for political recognition by the civil rights movements successfully highlighted the need for coherent individual identity as well as the unitary collective category of the people' *(ibid.).*

How the child gradually develops and grows into an adult person, depends on the relationships he/she develops with other people in the process of gaining maturity (Elias, 1991). Once babies and young children are exposed to the 'outside world', such as preschool, school, church and other institutions, they find that there are new and additional rules outside their smaller world, and the things they have learnt are then either reinforced or contradicted (Harro,2008). These first impressions then form their future values and beliefs. In order to

become an adult, 'the child cannot do so without the influence and relationship with older and more powerful beings' (Elias, 1991:26). A child needs society in order to become physically adult (Elias, 1991); 'so, the adult becomes an adult in terms of the relationships allotted to him by his fate and, only in connection with the structure of the society in which he has grown up' (Elias, 1991:27). In childhood a person is just who they are, with their identities being shaped by the world they are born into. All of the mechanics of society are in place, so assumptions, rules, roles and structures of oppression are already functioning. The individual is exposed to these through the process of socialisation. Harro (2008:15), asserts that 'Everyone is born into a specific set of social identities, and this predisposes them to unequal roles in the 'dynamic system of oppression'. No one has a choice about their parents: - 'we are just who we are' (Harro, 2008: 16). As soon as the baby is born, they begin to be 'socialized' by the people they love and trust and we are influenced and shaped by them 'those who are raising us' (Harro, 2000:16). 'This shapes our 'self-concepts, self-perceptions, and the norms and rules we must follow, the roles we are taught to play, our expectations for the future, and our dreams' (Harro,2008:17). Our concepts and self- perceptions are formed, and we learn the norms and rules that we are expected to follow, and the 'roles we are taught to play' (Harro, 2000:17). Key figures in our early life (such as caregivers), act as role models, guiding behaviour, values and beliefs (Harro, 2000). 'Habit and routine play a fundamental role in the forging of relations in the potential space between infant and caretaker' (Giddens, 1991:39). Trust in the caregiver from early life, helps to create the experience of a stable world and a coherent sense of self identity.

Birth right for the Gypsy is reinforced by their upbringing, and the child will have been aware of her/his identity from birth (Okely, 1983:67). From birth, Gypsy Children are exposed to a strong set of rules, roles, and assumptions that shape their sense of themselves and they begin to develop a sense of self in response to the social context of early life experiences (Mead, 1934). 'Gypsy kids are taught from day one about our beliefs and practices' (Boswell, 2018:np). Although individuals realise from childhood that people are 'different', they may not notice until they mature that people are oppressed or understand the reasons for this. It is later, that most of the messages we receive about how to be, what rules to follow and what roles to play…'what assumptions to make and what to believe, will either contradict or reinforce what we have already learned at home'(Harro, 2000:17). As people grow older, they begin to understand other more complex aspects of difference *(ibid.).* For Gypsy children, the realisation they are different may not happen until they start school.

As a child or young adolescent, an individual tends to accept the values and attitudes present in his or her environment. 'When the family and community present a strong positive image of the group for the minority child, the child is likely to have a positive identification with the group, even though it has not been consciously examined and hence may be vague and inarticulate' (Phinney, 1992:146). So, if we are a member of a group (white, male, able, middle class for example), we may not notice until maturity is reached, that the rules are unfair and possibly, not even then.

In everyday life, we are inundated with unquestioned and stereotypical messages that shape how we think and what we believe about ourselves and others. Children and young people may also internalize negative images and stereotypes from wider society, including those from mainstream institutions and the media. 'The sense of oneself as belonging to a particular category of people, or of being characterized by particular labels, begins quite early in life' (Deaux, Reid, Mizra, and Ethier, 1995:35).

Laing, (1960) suggests that to have ontological security an individual must experience a sense of being 'a continuous person' who is able to enjoy a whole existence, as opposed to anxiety and loss of meaning that could threaten everyday experiences and self's integrity. Giddens (1991) pays particular attention to the importance of a continuous narrative, or 'sense of self,' which can be found in self's ability to 'keep a particular narrative going'.

Giddens's (1991) definition of ontological security emphasises self-identity, and 'the need of people to be in control of their environment and to feel secure of their place in society' (Van Cleemput and Parry, 2000: 106). Giddens (1984) explains ontological security as:

> The confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self -identity and in the constancy of their social and material environments. Basic to a feeling of ontological security is a sense of the reliability of persons and things
> (Giddens, 1991:220).

For Giddens then, ontological security is about continuity and having trust in the world. It is a deep concept about people having confidence in the social order, in their place in society, in their own right to be themselves, and a belief that their self-realisation can be achieved (Giddens, 1991). Ontological security suggests that people need more than just adequate sustenance and shelter to live happy and fulfilled lives. They also need a secure base to which they can return if in trouble or fatigued. The home has been identified as an important source of ontological security; 'the home is a site of constancy in the social and material environment … a secure base around which to construct identities' (Hiscock., Kearns., Macintyre, and

Ellaway, 2001). Lack of control and the inability to provide a secure home, or to have choice in this, is threatened and where there is lack of opportunity to exercise autonomy and achieve self-realisation (Hiscock et al 2001). Giddens argues that ontological security also requires a positive view of the self in relation to others, or, in other words, social status (Giddens, 1991). Lack of control over one's life circumstances is a contributory factor of an individual's negative view of their own identity (Marmot and Wilkinson, 2005). In understanding the sense of self, Giddens believes that 'a person who possesses a stable sense of ontological security, has positively dealt with their experiences and feelings of biographical continuity when he/she is able to grasp reflexivity, and to a lesser degree, communicate with other people' (Giddens, 1991: 54).

Mental health issues such anxiety, on the other hand, is not only 'caused by disturbing circumstances, or their threat' but can at the very same time 'mobilise adaptive responses and novel initiatives' (Giddens,1991:221) and some individuals appear to have no choice but to change themselves in order to adapt to various circumstances. As a consequence of society and the self being 'in flux' 'the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change' *(ibid.).*

> Where people feel in control of their environment, free from surveillance, free to be themselves and at ease, in the deepest psychological sense, in a world that might at times be experienced as threatening and uncontrollable, they feel secure. (Giddens,1991: 361)

Despite their experiences being the opposite, the Gypsy community have survived generations of hostility and although their cultural traditions may have needed to adapt, and through doing so, they continue to manage to maintain their own culture. Research however evidences significantly high levels of mental health issues (Peacock, 2010; Parry et al, 2004).

Children may enter adolescence with positive, negative, or mixed feelings about their ethnicity (Phinney, 1992). Models of ethnic, racial, or minority identity development emphasize the importance for minority group members to examine and question pre-existing attitudes and assumptions about ethnicity, as a necessary step toward identity achievement (Atkinson et al, 1993; Cross, 1991; Phinney, 1990).

Giddens(1991: 54), sees the life course as a series of 'passages', where a person moves from one stage to another. Each stage of the lifespan will bring with it a series of challenges and barriers which need to be overcome. The stages through which we move will inevitably involve a sense of loss; for example, becoming an adult and leaving home, reinforces the loss of

childhood and dependence. Threats to the individual being in infancy, provide feelings or pre-sentiment of loss, 'and the realization that the constancy of persons and objects is bound up with the stable relations provided by the caregiving agent' (Giddens, 1991:49). The individual's self-identity presumes a narrative. The person an individual currently sees themselves as, their identity, 'will be but one of an anthology of identities that are inhabited over several points in time' (Rutherford, 1990:12). 'So, all human beings, in all cultures, provide a division between their self-identities and the 'performance' they put on for specific contexts' (Taylor, 1989:58). 'In the formation of self - identity, there is a sense of reflexive awareness' (Giddens, 1991:52).

As individuals, we occupy a variety of roles, and belong to various groups; therefore, we are in possession of multiple identities. 'Identity theory seeks to explain the specific meanings that individuals have for the multiple identities they claim; how these identities relate to one another for any one person; how their identities influence their behaviour, thoughts, and feelings or emotions; and how their identities tie them in to society at large' (Burke and Stets, 2009:50).

Aspects of identity theory focus on inter-group relations. This is based on the idea that people come to see themselves as members of a particular group or category. As members of this group they then begin to see this as the (the in-group). Once members of this group, individuals begin to make comparison with other groups which they subsequently categorise as the out-group (Turner et al, 1987). 'Othering is described as 'the process of casting a group, an individual or an object into the role of the 'other' and establishing one's own identity through opposition to and, frequently, vilification of this other' (Jensen, 2011:3). 'This term 'now occupies an important position in feminist, postcolonial, civil rights and sexual minority discourses' *(ibid.).* This process of identity formation (individual or group) which involves constructing an 'other' is a much-explored phenomenon amongst academics such as Bhabha, 1994; Mercer, 1990. Throughout human history, people have employed strategies in dealing with the other, the foreign, the deviant or the stranger; to accept, respect and incorporate them within the mainstream and to exclude them 'by erecting strong boundaries and special institutions in which they are kept in isolation' (Levi - Strauss, 1978:62).

Identity and Belonging

Feelings of belonging in social groups can imbue life with meaning in various ways such as providing stability, helping individuals create a shared social identity, and allowing them to pursue higher order collective goals (Baumeister, 1991; Tajfel, 1978). For Weeks, identity is linked to a sense of belonging:

> At its most basic [belonging] gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality…at the centre, however, are the values we share or wish to share with others (Weeks, 1990:88).

Humans have a biological need for social relationships (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). People who feel a sense of belonging, who feel socially connected, supported and respected are able to build trusting relationships with others. This also increases confidence, feelings of being valued, and the ability to face adversity (Romeo, 2015). Therefore, being able to face life's challenges depends, at least in part, on having this sense of belonging. Psychological research defines what is a sense of belonging which includes, the need for affection between people (Murray, 1938), the need for positive regard from others (Rogers, 1995), the need for belongingness (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1993; Maslow, 1968), and the need for relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 1991; Ryan, 1993; Vallerand, 1997 all cited by Baumeister and Leary, 1995:500).

For Austin, identity is about belonging, 'based on what individuals have in common with other people and what makes them different from others' (2005:3). He goes on to say that 'this provides them with a stable core to their own individuality, their social relationship and their complex involvement with others' *(ibid.).* Helms, describes identity as 'a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perceptions that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group' (1993: 3). 'Each person lives with a variety of potentially contradictory identities which battle within them such as their gender, colour, sexuality, ethnicity, ability; the possibilities go on and on, affecting a sense of belonging' (Weeks, 1990:88).

Belonging can be understood in various ways in relation to family, ethnicity, class, traditions and through communal shared memories. Being able to position oneself and others through shared memories is the strongest element of belonging in a variety of studies. In psychology, the need for interpersonal contact was asserted in several ways by Freud (1930). Although Maslow's (1968) influential theory depicting the hierarchy of needs was not supported by evidence, he ranked the need to belong in the centre of his motivational hierarchy, arguing that belongingness needs do not emerge until food, hunger, safety, and other basic needs are satisfied; they take precedence over esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1968). Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory also identified the need to form and maintain relationships from birth.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) propose that the need to belong has two main features. First, people need frequent personal contacts or interactions with another person. Ideally, these interactions would be affectively positive or pleasant, but it is important that the majority be free from conflict and negative affect. Secondly, people need to perceive that there is an interpersonal bond or relationship marked by stability, affective concern, and continuation into the foreseeable future (Baumeister and Leary, 1995:500).

Group membership is an important influence as people expect that they will be treated more positively by their in-group than by out group members. These expectations shape information processing and memory, leading people to forget the bad things (relative to good things) that their fellow in-group members do (Howard and Rothbart, 1980:3). Group memories of the past also help to create a sense of community, both in the present and in the future (Bhahba, 1996:55)

The cultural settings in which we are born and raised, influence our behaviour. In the course of socialisation, each person develops a sense of their own identity and so they develop the capacity for independent thought and action. 'The individual's biography, in order to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive' (Giddens, 1991:52). Giddens argues that through the development of early trust relationships in childhood, 'the individual is enabled to develop a protective cocoon, which filters out dangers and other threats to the integrity of the self' (Giddens, 1991:54). People tend to associate themselves or identify with those who are similar to themselves in their culture or subculture and to feel more distant from those who are dissimilar.

Bhopal and Myers highlight that distinctions drawn between non-Gypsy and Gypsy ways of life are important markers of cultural identity that is understood by family members but also of status within the wider community (2008). Many Gypsy groups themselves have a preference for their self-segregating in their own groups and are selective about with whom they mix. For example, on some permanent authorised sites, separate accommodation has needed to be provided for Irish Travellers and New Travellers due to fragmented relationships between different groups (Peacock, 2010). On one site, residents had posted a hand painted sign stating, 'No Irish Travellers' and on another 'No New Age' at the entrance to the site (Peacock and Herbert, 2014).

Yet although Gypsies and Irish Travellers have differing origins and cultural traditions, there are some striking similarities between the different populations. Both have their own distinct community languages – Romanes (spoken by Romany Gypsies) and Shelta/Gammon/Cant

spoken by Irish Travellers; both groups operate within close-knit family structures, and have strong nomadic traditions that are facing erosion as a result of sedentarist policies – and yet they refer to themselves as two distinct and separate groups (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). Powell found that Romany Gypsies often applied exaggerated and stereotypical views to groups such as Irish Travellers in the 'same way that applied to their own collective by the settled population, often constructing them as violent and linking them [for example] to excessive alcohol consumption' (Powell, 2008:97).

New Travellers are not a distinct ethnic group recognised under race law, and their separate culture, identity, and values are not generally recognised in society (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). The economic crisis of the 1980s and resulting urban decline and unemployment, prompted many people to experiment with new lifestyles and New Travellers took on a more identifiable from in the 'alternative' and 'festival' movements of the 1970s (Earle, 1994). In 1985, there was a crunch point between the police, the media and New Travellers at the 'Battle of the Beanfield' *(ibid.).* In response, the Conservative government introduced new enforcement measures against nomadism in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which impinged on the nomadic practices of all nomadic groups.

In direct response to increasing numbers of vehicle - dwelling 'New Travellers', the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA, 1994) contained swingeing regulations of where and how Gypsies and other Travellers park up, supported by harsh financial and practical penalties, including seizure of trailers and ultimately imprisonment. In the wake of such legislation, a substantial proportion of 'New Travellers' either returned to housing or moved abroad to continue their way of life, leaving ethnic Gypsies and Travellers to bemoan the destruction of their traditional way of life (Clark and Greenfields, 2006).

Cultural practices

> The term 'culture' refers to the language, beliefs, values and norms, customs, dress, diet, roles, knowledge and skills, and all the other things that people learn that make up the 'way of life' of any society. Culture is passed on from one generation to the next through the process of socialization (Browne, 2008:31).

The individual claims an identity for her or himself, based on a feeling or perception of commonality with others, and through making comparisons of differences and similarities between themselves and others. 'In many ways, those shared characteristics are what from some perspectives constitute culture' (Austin, 2005:2).

Much of how we lead our life is based upon choice. Taylor (1989) describes this as fundamental to our day-to-day activities; no culture denies us the opportunity for making choices in our day to day affairs. So, traditions and cultural practices are choices we make in our lives, among an indefinite range of possible behaviour patterns (Taylor, 1989). 'Yet by definition, tradition or established habit orders life within relatively set channels' (Taylor, 1989:80). However, for the Gypsy community, the lifestyle choices that they have are limited by legislation (Peacock and Herbert, 2014).

Lifestyle (such as where we live, what job we do) may not always be a choice, however. Everyday lifestyles are routine practices incorporated into the choices we make about how we dress, what we eat etc. The routines we follow are open to change 'in the light of the mobile nature of self-identity' (Taylor, 1989:81). So, every decision we make about what and how to eat, to wear and how to conduct ourselves, contribute to the routines we have. Taylor believes 'that these are not just decisions about how to act, but who to be' (1989:81). Lifestyle involves a cluster of habits and that this has a certain unity, which is important to a continuing sense of ontological security *(ibid.).* 'So, someone who has chosen a given lifestyle may see some options available to them as out of character with their choice, as would others with whom that person interacts' (Taylor,1989: 82).When it comes to choice however, it is important to note that not every choice may be beneficial to us; i.e. we may choose to lead an unhealthy lifestyle in terms of what we eat, ignoring health advice because we prefer an alternative, or possibly we are unable to make better choices (such as eating fresh fruit and vegetables for example) due to financial limitations. So, choice can become limited when financial resources are restricted by lack of opportunities to gain a sufficient income.

'Within the culture of a particular society, there will be both positive and negative expectations of how individuals perform' (Giddens, 1991:52). So, identity is not only about how individuals or groups see and define themselves, but also how other individuals or groups see and define them in return. The beliefs and views held by G/R/T people from a complex set of rules, governing matters 'such as cleanliness, purity, respect, honour and justice' (Boswell, 2018: 3). Gypsy people understand cleanliness more deeply than the majority population and the customs relating to cleanliness also function as principles of life. 'An overriding sense of cleanliness and associated practices are the foundation of Gypsy health traditions' (Acton,1997: 168). These beliefs are followed in the execution of all daily activities - from handling the dishes, cutlery and preparing food, to washing the laundry.

'The outer body acts as a protective covering for the inside which must be kept pure, whilst the inner body symbolises the secret ethnic self, a sustained individuality, which is reaffirmed

by the solidarity of the Gypsy group' (Cheal, 2012: 13). A person's face and clothes can be black with grime but would not be considered mochadi, so long as the inner body is considered as clean (Smith, L., 2004). 'The outer body (or skin) with its discarded scales, accumulated dirt, by products of hair and waste such as feces are all potentially polluting if recycled through the inner body' (Cheal, 2012:13). This mean that 'anything taken into the inner body via the mouth (including cutlery and crockery) must be ritually clean ... the outer body must be kept separate from the inner' (Okely, 1983:85). Gypsies therefore make a distinction between washing objects for the inner body and the washing of the outer body. 'This manifests itself in the need to have several different bowls for washing dishes and the body and eating utensils and tools for food preparation must never be washed in a bowl used for washing the hands, the rest of the body or clothing' (Okely, 1983:80-90).

'Many of the cleanliness taboos within Gypsy culture are associated with women, death and food' (Vesey-Fitzgerald, 1973:43). The physical aspects of these traditional practices rely on a number of rules, including:

- Water and waste separation
- The cleaning of clothes bed linen/towels
- Preparation of food and drinks
- Washing and general hygiene appearance
- Menstruating and childbirth
- Interaction with animals
- Cleanliness of the home environment
- Separation of males and females at times such as weddings, and social environments

(Clark and Greenfields, 2006:23)

Cleanliness taboos are important as they highlight the specific context and pressures of domesticity faced, in particular, by Gypsy women in comparison to their non-Gypsy counterparts in the settled community (Horne, 2019:65). The upholding of these taboos and the methodical practices associated, operates from a two-fold perspective; 'the intention is to both maintain physical, mental and spiritual health, and also to respect aspects of social, familial and religious order' *(ibid.).* Despite these beliefs being weakened with the passage of time, rituals concerning cleanliness are still currently practiced wherever possible and are considered second nature amongst 'even by those who no longer know the origins' (Smith, L., 2004:84).

Acton, cites Okely's argument (1983) that these taboos are 'an essentially coherent functional system to preserve the boundaries between men and women, and to exclude non-Gypsies who are regarded to be less strict in hygiene practices' (1997:170). By maintaining a separation between cultures, Gypsies afford themselves layers of cultural protection from a larger society that would prefer a greater degree of integration (Horne, 2019), and based

upon their past experiences, which poses a threat to their survival as an ethnic group. Boswell (2018: no page) adds, 'We are taught what is marime and what is not from the moment we are born. Once an item is classed as marime, we avoid or limit contact with that thing. Avoiding dirtiness impacts how we act, think and speak'.

According to Gypsy beliefs, 'the female lower body encompasses and forms the centre of many Rom taboos because of the female associations with menstruation' (Edden., Hughes., McCormack., and Prendergast, 2011:140). As opposed to the Guadje woman who may wear an apron for domestic chores, 'for the Gypsy woman the apron is to protect the food and cooking from the 'dirt' of the dress, which is ritually contaminated by the outer body and specifically the sexual parts'(Okely, 1983: 238). The apron 'would cover the woman's lower body on both the front and back' (Okely, 1996:64).

Due to beliefs around menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth, women are considered as 'marime' or unclean and impure at specific times in the life circle. Even as young children, females are expected to display 'shame about bodily functions and in the past, they would wear aprons from puberty, due to the shame of this bodily process' (Stewart, 1997:214). The birth of a child within the family is celebrated as a special event, which ensures the continuation of the family line and thus adds to the respect of the family. (Dawson, 2000). 'However, the taboo associated with the female lower body is extended to the birthing process and prior to the birth, the pregnant female must not prepare food' (Weyrauch et al, 2001: 43). 'A woman is also considered to be 'marime' for a period of six weeks after childbirth, although the child is then considered as 'innocent of defilement, shame or social responsibility after then' (Mayall, 2004; Smith, L.,2004: 83). In the past, 'after the birth, and after a short period of exclusion from the rest of the family, the tent, bedding and clothing, were burned and crockery and utensils used by the woman were smashed' (Mayall, 1988; Smith, L., 2004:84). So, women on their period, or the sick may be feared because they have the power to spread their marime to others, and in the past, pregnant and menstruating women were removed from the responsibilities of preparing and cooking food, being considered to be dangerous at specific times in their reproductive cycle (Dawson, 2000). Boswell argues that 'the most marime individuals, are the ones who do not follow our cleaning rules and rituals', (2018:no page). As most births now take place in hospital, some of these previous cultural practices have been eroded (Peacock, 2010).

Stewart (1997:210), highlights the fact that Gaudjes (or non-Gypsies) are considered impure because they do not uphold the same values and beliefs and display no embarrassment about

their sexuality, fertility, or bodily functions. In relation to engaging with the Gaudje community, there remain 'huge concerns and suspicions within the G/R/T community, which have arisen due to the previous discrimination they have experienced' (Heaslip, 2015:25). 'Any degree of cultural separation should not be seen as an act of hostility but be understood as a form of cultural maintenance' (Horne, 2019:65).

An example of how we make choices, relates to the routines we follow in relation to preparing, serving and eating food. 'Food operates as one of the key cultural signs that structure people's identities and their concepts of others' (Xu, 2017:33). In many cultures, life's milestones are celebrated with the preparation and sharing of food; so, christenings, birthdays, weddings and funerals are opportunities where people share (sometimes exotic or special) food according to their cultural preferences. Ethnic identities are expressed and maintained through dietary choices (Baase, 2014). The food that is eaten can strengthen ties to ethnicity on a day-to-day basis and it can also reflexively reinforce a sense of identity when socializing in another culture. Eating is an intensely personal act. What we eat, communicates to others our beliefs, cultural and social backgrounds and experiences. 'Testament to how we think about who we are, foods often vary across cultures and play a major role in defining culture as well as identity' (Baase, 2014:3). Social stratification and class are defined by taste (Baase, 2014). Although there are exceptions to this, 'Food is almost always shared; people eat together; mealtimes are events when the whole family or settlement or village comes together' (Fox, 2014:1) and I would add that this is symbolic of group, family and kinship belonging.

Eating is a means of becoming; not simply in the sense of nourishment but more importantly of what people choose to eat, what they can afford to eat, what they secretly crave but are ashamed to eat in front of others, and how they eat. Food, as the most significant medium of traffic between the inside and outside of our bodies, organizes, signifies, and legitimates our sense of self and distinguishes us from others, who practice different food ways.

The powerful act of sharing food, which may involve simple everyday foods to traditional foods, is thus inherently layered with meaning for cultures globally. Many aspects of Gypsy lifestyle are misunderstood, such as their personal hygiene codes and pollution taboos, which are discussed at length by Okely (1983:80). Crabb (1831) observed the great deal of ritual that surrounded washing in all its forms, and this is still a common practice amongst those Gypsies who are able to do so. Those who are in housing find this more difficult to uphold, as their kitchen, bathroom and toilet are all situated inside the building in proximity to one another (Peacock, 2014). For those living on sites, the washing facilities are always situated outside the

living quarters, so that bowls and utensils used to prepare food are able to be kept scrupulously clean and would never be used for any other purpose (Smith,L,. 2004). Acton (1997: 168) asserts that 'the highest priority of the taboos seemed to prevent anything unclean being eaten.' Contrasting his data with that of Thompson, whose research in 1922 - 1929, centred around health taboos generically as 'the un-cleanliness of women', Acton reports that 'these are not the members of a dying race of fifty years ago, they are the current practices of a thriving community, that have developed and are developing in accordance with the social and economic needs of that community' (Acton, 1997:169).

Gender roles in the Gypsy community are still divided along very traditional lines, with the men now taking greater responsibility for providing a livelihood for the family, whilst the women remain responsible for raising the children and home making (Bhopal and Myers, 2008). 'After marriage, a wife must remain sexually faithful to her husband, and certain codes of behaviour are expected. such as not being alone with another man' (Okely, 1983:203).

> Far from being the mysterious sexually proactive figure highlighted in the media, the life of the contemporary Gypsy woman is far from the flighty seductress but is more likely to be burdened with domestic duties (Okely, 1983: 203).

The women also perform a key role in engaging with institutions and structures such as the educational system and health service on behalf of their families (Casey, 2014:14). A variety of researchers and practitioners have found that it is through the women that they have been able to access the Gypsy community (Okely, 1983; Mayall,1981; Heaslip, 2015; Greenfields, 2008; Van Cleemput and Parry, 2000; Parry et al, 2004; Peacock and Herbert, 2014). However, it is important to note that while traditional gender roles are more discernible among some Gypsy-Traveller communities, there are differences from one community and family to the next and it is important to note this heterogeneity in attitudes (Powell, 2016: 98). Women's ethnic identity might affect the labour participation in that 'the subordinate position of women in the labour market and in the home/family are interrelated, and part of an overall social system in which women are subordinated to men' *(Ibid.).* In the past, the women were in the forefront of the family economy and were actively involved in earning a living through hawking - door to door selling of handmade objects, picking fruit and vegetables and flower selling, amongst others (Okely, 1983).

'A cultural preference for self-employment rather than the monotony of wage- labour means that Gypsy/Travellers have long been in 'symbiotic equilibrium' with sedentary society' (Acton, 1997: 237). Since the post war there have been major social and economic changes which have

made many itinerant jobs obsolete, creating cultural change for Gypsies and Travellers (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). The erosion of the cultural and traditional ways of earning a living has impacted on the Gypsy community severely, with more reliance on state benefits as result of lack of opportunity for employment *(ibid.).* This has created high levels of dependency on the state which is at odds with the cultural preferences for self-employment and independence. 'The loss of many traditional employment opportunities therefore risks impoverishing large swathes of the Gypsy community as has happened in central European countries where Roma are frequently destitute' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 83). However, the determinisation and relentless drive to survive (common to Gypsy and Traveller populations) mean that innovative individuals will doubtless seek out and identify ways of 'turning a penny a new way' (Smith and Greenfields 2013: 84).

For Gypsies, it is common practice for the extended family to take responsibility for providing care for children, the sick and older people; whereas generally in mainstream British society it is now common for those with additional needs and older people to be placed in the care system, this is highly disapproved of by the Gypsy community where the role of carer falls to the women. 'In fact, women and girls perform the full range of domestic duties from caring for children and elderly parents to feeding the family and organising the household, and this highly gendered allocation of responsibilities was very much accepted as the way things were' (Bourdieu, 1984; cited in Casey, 2014:11). Failing to care for an elderly family member to live up to such cultural values 'reflects badly both on individual and the wider family' (Bhopal and Myers, 2008:35; Okely, 1983).

Gypsy-Traveller women have an altogether more nuanced view of their domestic role (Casey, 2014). Rather than viewing it as merely the daily grind of domesticity (which punctuates many non-Gypsy women's lives also), participants typically conveyed a real sense that looking after the family, cooking and cleaning is a highly conscious and ritual act on their part and an integral part of their cultural identity (Okely, 1983). 'Hence, this is closely tied to their beliefs about the importance of maintaining Gypsy-Traveller ways' (Acton, 1997:14).

> Anthropologists have for many years been concerned with the social ramifications of death and the ways that mourning and memorialization practices help shape the identities of the living' (Bloch and Parry, 1982; Metcalf and Huntingdon, 1991; Van Gennep, 1960 cited by Balkan, 2015:120).

Older members of the Gypsy family are the most respected in the household, and 'age is synonymous with authority and life experience' (Sutherland, 1975:263). Older people are

considered ‘essentially moral and clean in comparison to those men and women who remain sexually active, and through this they gain status and respect of others’ *(ibid.).*

Consistent with Gypsy-Travellers generally (Sandford,1973), the family is a considerable source of pride in the study group and these Gypsy-Traveller women also have the main responsibility for maintaining family closeness and kinship networks; ensuring elderly parents are cared for and keeping in touch with siblings and a wider circle of close relations. The construction of their Gypsy-Traveller cultural identity also involves added responsibilities for planning social gatherings through which their ethnic culture is kept alive (Casey, 2014:11); this ranges from events such as horse fairs, steam fairs, family weddings and also in the making of arrangements surrounding the death, birth and marriage of a relative.

Death

Culture shapes the behaviours of societies including expressions of grief and mourning rituals, thus providing a framework and timescale for bereavement behaviours (Niemeyer, 2001). Death and grief are universal, the place of the dead in society, mourning rituals and the manifestations of grief vary greatly across cultures (Neimeyer, 2001; Thompson, 2012).

Death rituals and beliefs are influenced by cultural heritage and traditions, some of which many are linked to religion (Liégeios, 2005; Okely, 1983). ‘Family honour and respect are fundamental values within Gypsy and Traveller communities, both in life and impacting on the shape of death rituals’ (Rogers, 2016:78). The concern for the Gypsy community is particularly evident in the level of care and respect given to the elderly who are regarded in the highest esteem within the community (Okely,1983). The anticipation of loss is openly expressed by younger family members who fear for the loss of older relatives (Greenfields 2006).

For Gypsies, death does not mark the end. Many believe that the spirit lives on and the graveside is the place in which family and friends grieve and show respect for the deceased. Practices associated with death and burial have been adapted over the years. In the past, it was common for all possessions, including the living wagon, of the dead to be destroyed (Dawson, 2000; Smith, L., 2004). Okely (1983) suggests that the practices of destroying possessions and property are also linked to the belief that deaths (and births) are polluting events and the burning of belongings is seen as a cleansing process.

Following the death of a family member, it is customary for close and extended family to keep a vigil over the body until the funeral. Due to the accommodation status of most Gypsies, practices have needed to adapt, and special arrangements often need to be made to ensure it is possible for the traditional vigil to be kept. On the day of the funeral, the family and extended family will walk behind the hearse and where possible, stop at places which are considered significant to the deceased along the route to the burial ground, celebrating their last journey (Dawson, 2000). Graves are often ornately decorated with large headstones often including a symbolic image representative of the life of the deceased such as horses or wagons. Such graves are well cared for with regular visits made by the family to graveside particularly on the anniversary of the death, birthdays and religious holidays, thus maintaining the place of the dead amongst the living (Clark and Greenfields 2006; Okely 1983; Parker and McVeigh; 2013).

In contrast to sedentary society where the place of birth is a primary marker for identity, for many Gypsies and Travellers it is their last resting place which is more important (Rogers, 2016:79). Williams (1976) provides insight into understanding these death rituals and beliefs where he discusses the traditions surrounding 'the silence of the living and the voices of the dead', explaining how although the dead are 'banished' they remain constant in the lives of the living. It is common in Gypsy culture for the name of the deceased not to be spoken (especially in public), although memories, stories and visits to the graveside keep the deceased an integral part of the family (Peacock, 2010).

Conclusion

To summarise in this chapter, I have referred to a number of ways of looking at identity and defining it in relation to Gypsy identity. Referring to existing theoretical perspectives on identity has provided several links to enable an understanding of Gypsy identify alongside the identities of respondents in the qualitative interviews and workshops which are integral to this study, and yet to be discussed. 'There is a growing social perception, which is certainly encouraged by popular media, that people can make what they want of their own lives' (Gauntlett, 2008:19).

G/R/T families have become increasingly sedentarised because movement not only remains illegal but is now almost impossible for many. Roadside verges and adjoining land have been rendered inaccessible by concrete posts (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). For some people who live in circumstances which are disadvantaged by poverty, exclusion and marginalization (such

as those in the study), the element of choice and ability to make changes, is constrained by lack of opportunity. 'These constraints can be very powerful and limiting' (Richardson and Ryder, 2012:78).

The socio-economic disadvantage that many Gypsies experience, compounded with the prejudice perpetuated by society, has prevented them from fighting back against negative stereotypes. In addition, the self-exclusionary practices in which some groups (such as those in the study) operate and therefore isolate themselves from other nomadic groups, provides a challenge in terms of a building unified approach to campaigning for social justice. The lack of lobbying power, and lack of a sense of agency has allowed too many myths about Gypsies to be circulated (Morris, 2000). This has added to the discrimination experienced by the community which in turn encourages self- segregation.

Society appears to have little knowledge or interest in the history or culture of Gypsy communities, and subsequently they tend to be viewed with suspicion and distrust, with as Bhopal argues 'a historic feeling of dividedness, and a non-crossable borderline between Gypsy culture and non-Gypsy culture' (Bhopal, 2008:1). Gypsy identity is created and maintained not only by tradition and hereditary factors, but also by the sociological, political and cultural forces which have 'created the ethnic narrative that is Gypsy identity' (Belton, 2005: 10).

Gypsies themselves perceive that they are seen as inferior through lack of entitlement to equal cultural rights that are afforded to other groups. They are positioned as a long-standing outsider group for whom integration has proceeded at an extraordinarily slow pace 'in comparison to other outsider groups' (Powell, 2016: 140). Integration between the study group and other Gypsy groups is also lacking, adding to their exclusion. Some people who feel they are targets and victims of oppression, may have been so 'beaten down' by the relentless messages of the cycle of oppression that they have given up and resigned themselves to either survive it or self-destruct; fear of challenging the system means that many (if not most) will not take the risk (Harro, 2008). For Gypsies and Travellers in housing, whilst theoretically better placed to access activities and leisure opportunities, a preference for 'being with our own kind' mitigates against take-up of services unless a large enough core membership of Gypsies and Travellers exists to provide a sense of cultural familiarity and personal safety (Clark and Greenfields, 2006).

It is well attested that Gypsies and Travellers face increasing challenges to their culture and traditional nomadic lifestyle (Cemlyn et al, 2009; Quarmby, 2013; Ryder, 2014). A variety of

research highlighting the inequality and marginalised lifestyles experienced by Gypsies and Travellers suggests that legislation and policy continue to discriminate against them, preventing rather than protecting the traditional nomadic lifestyle favoured by these communities (Rogers, 2016).

Research undertaken by Parry et al (2004) evidences that settled or housed Gypsies and Travellers have significantly poorer health than those who are mobile, including mental health problems; this can be attributed to the lack of mobility and loss of being able to follow a traditional lifestyle. Gypsies and Travellers in general are nearly three times more likely to experience anxiety and just over twice as likely to be depressed than the mainstream population, with women twice as likely to experience mental health problems as men, as confirmed by the findings of Parry et al (2004). Greenfields (2008:15), concurs with this view, suggesting the reason for this is 'cultural dislocation'. The change from leading a traditional lifestyle, the aversion to bricks and mortar, their loss of mobility and being separated from close family members promotes feelings of isolation. The Gypsy community are often identified by researchers and professionals as being a vulnerable group due to increased morbidity and mortality (Goward., Repper, J., Appleton, L., and Hagan, 2006; Parry et al, 2007) and their marginalised status within society is often highlighted (Van Cleemput, 2007; McCaffery 2009). This is discussed and later referred to in Chapter 5.

The feelings of isolation experienced by the Gypsy and Traveller community is often exacerbated by experiences of prejudice and discrimination causing further isolation from the sedentary community as well as exacerbating their self-exclusion due to a fear of social integration with the gaudje majority.
'While the Gypsies' economy has for centuries exploited geographical mobility, they are no longer employed in the seasonal fruit and vegetable picking on which UK famers historically depended (Richardson and Ryder, 2012: 6)'. Those who are settled into housing cannot risk losing their tenancy by moving to other locations for seasonal work which increases their independence on welfare. If circumstances were different, and the challenges affecting the settled Gypsy group in this study were addressed, the question remains if there is any possibility that the Gypsies' historic contribution of occasional goods and service in the larger economy could ever again be facilitated? (Richardson and Ryder, 2012). In addition, Richardson and Ryder, (2012: 10), raise the point that 'the forceable settlement of Gypsies in social housing and the resulting encouragement of welfare dependency has not only add to deterioration of mental and physical health, but is in the long run far more costly than the millions spent on evictions.'

To conclude, ‘Interaction in such a social system does not lead to its liquidation, but through change and acculturation, cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence. Therefore, the mistrust, fear and rejection of mainstream society have contributed to the formation of certain Gypsy and Traveller cultural identities’ (Richardson and Ryder, 2012:9)

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

The primary focus of this study was to gain an understanding of:

> *How the settled Gypsy community in a village (Village A) in the South East of England express and sustain their identity*

In order to explain the theoretical approaches used, and to articulate the methods chosen, in this chapter I describe the research methodology which was used. I begin by summarising the aims and the objectives of the research and highlight the epistemological underpinnings of the work. I explore some of the ethical issues that may arise during the process of conducting the research as well as identifying strategies implemented to ensure the rigour and robustness of the research (Heaslip, 2015).

Philosophy of approaches used

In this study, I adopt an interpretivist approach. 'Interpretivism is concerned with the understanding and development of theory, in contrast to positivism which is concerned with objectivity and empiricism and the testing of theory, or deduction' (Van Cleemput, 2007:138). The researcher's interpretation and representation of the participants' perspectives, whilst aiming to stay as true to their accounts as possible, is informed by her own observations and understanding of those perspectives and deeper theoretical insights that help to place the interpretation in a broader context (Van Cleemput, 2007:139). There are multiple realities or perspectives, and individual interpretations of data will yield different understandings. The interpretivist researcher enters the field with some sort of prior insight of the research context but assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to the complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). This approach means that the researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study, and lets it develop with the help of informants, recognising that phenomena can be represented from different perspectives. By using this approach, the researcher is able to gain an understanding of the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures, as close to how participants feel it or live it (Kvale, 1996), and to provide an 'analysis of the multiple meanings of individual experiences which are socially and historically constructed in order to develop a theory or pattern' (Creswell, 2003:18). The aim is to not seek to reproduce reality but to represent it (Hammersley, 1992).

Researchers across disciplines seek a method that will allow them to accurately record their own observations, while also uncovering the meanings their subjects bring to their life

experiences. The researcher cannot replicate the experiences of the participants (Charmaz, 2006) or be separated from the phenomenon they are studying (Holloway, 1998). However, poststructuralists and postmodernists believe that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual: -

> Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. However, there are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of, and between the observer and the observed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2007: 30).

The interpretivist approach is frequently attributed to Weber and his concept of 'verstehen' meaning understanding something in its context (Holloway, 1998:2). 'Interpretation involves an ongoing circular process of moving between one's own perspective and the perspective of the other person' (Ezzy,2002:27).

In the study I aimed to gain an understanding of the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures as close to how participants feel it or live it (Kvale, 1996). This would enable me to provide an analysis of the multiple meanings of individual's socially and historically constructed experiences, in order to develop a theory or pattern (Creswell, 2003:18). By using this approach, one's personal bias and prior knowledge both impact on the findings, which means there is therefore a need to be reflexive and to develop and redevelop the analysis of the themes. 'An important part of the research analysis process is to ensure that the emerging findings are available for critical scrutiny and reflection by participants' (Van Cleemput, 2007:139).

The researcher does not just leave the field with mountains of empirical data, and then easily write up his or her findings; qualitative interpretations need to be constructed, and various techniques can be used to make sense of the data, such as by using a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). As the study progressed, I was aware that I would play a major part of the research process in terms of both data collection, and analysis.

Using an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter enables the researcher to undertake their study in the most natural setting possible. 'This then attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2). The influences and pre-understandings brought to the research situation will inevitably inform understanding and interpretation, and therefore it is inevitable, that my own personal views, along with any external influences and pre understandings and assumptions will have some influence over the interpretation of the findings. 'Sophisticated understanding

is developed through the interpretations and theories being continuously redeveloped in a hermeneutic circle, as interpretation involves an ongoing circular process of moving between one's own perspective and the perspective of the other person' (Ezzy, 2002:26). This method is based on a naturalistic approach to data collection, where, by undertaking interviews and observations, meanings emerge. This usually occurs towards the end of the research process (Dudovskiy, 2012).

Bassett describes the three basic aspects of the hermeneutic circle as:

- Our cultural background which presents us with a way of understanding.
- Pre- understanding as our structure of 'being in the world' i.e. our history and story which is always present
- Co-constitution i.e. we are constructed by our world and simultaneously we construct the world from our experience and background

Table 4.1: Bassett, 2004:158, cited by Van Cleemput, 2007:139

Qualitative research

Qualitative research involves using an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The qualitative researcher will undertake their study in the most natural setting possible, 'attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2).

A qualitative approach is exploratory and seeks to explain 'how' and 'why' a particular phenomenon, or behaviour, operates as it does in a particular context; qualitative research is an endlessly creative and interpretive method of data collection (Mcleod, 2017), enabling the researcher to gain a rich and complex understanding of people's experiences which would not then be generalized to other larger groups (Cresswell, 2003). A qualitative approach enables us to 'discover and understand beliefs, values, decisions, attached meanings and actions (Van Cleemput, 2007:136). The nature of qualitative inquiry enables researchers to gain a detailed insight into lives of the participants, through the interaction between the researcher and participant (Cresswell, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2007).

Establishing rigour within qualitative research relates to the four key areas of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Guba, 1990; Morse et al, 2002). There are also core features that all qualitative analysis methods have in common - with stages involving the data management and generation of findings *(ibid.).* Data needs to be valid and a true representation of the participants' views. A qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes 'knowledge claims' and provides an analysis of the multiple meanings of individual experiences. 'These meanings are socially and historically constructed, with an intent of

developing a theory or pattern, leading to advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-oriented, collaborative or change oriented) or both' (Creswell, 2003: 180).

Hoey defines ethnography as 'both a qualitative research process and method; one conducts an ethnography and product 'the outcome of this process is an ethnography whose aim is cultural interpretation' (2014:2). 'Ethnography is the study of social interaction, behaviours and perceptions that occur within groups, and communities' (Reeves, Kuper, and Hodges, 2008:337). The aim is to provide 'rich, holistic insights into peoples' views and actions through the collection of observations and interviews' (Reeves, Kuper, and Hodges, 2008:512) and hearing and working through the authentic voices and production of the participants. Ethnography is understood to be the most effective way of obtaining accurate data on cultural beliefs and understanding of the traditional practices that impact on daily functioning (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The ethnographer goes beyond reporting experiences and details of events – but attempts to explore what these experiences mean *(Ibid.).*

> Ethnographers set out to show how social action in one world makes sense from the point of view of another, by observing and studying the encounters between social actors, and documenting and analysing the ceremonial order of social interaction and the spoken activities that constitute such encounters (Atkinson, 2014:47).

Talk is a major form of social interaction. The ethnographer gathers information from in-depth interviews, diaries, photographs and a variety of data collection techniques, explaining how these perspectives represent what might be called 'webs of meaning and 'the cultural constructions, in which people live' (Hoey, 2014:2). Ethnographers use conversational interviews which allow them to discuss, probe merging issues or ask questions in a naturalistic manner (Reeves et al, 2008: 513). 'The researcher becomes a listener and one who encourages the dialogue to continue' (Prosser,2000: 26), 'exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon and investigating a small number of cases in-depth and detail' (Strauss and Corbin, 1996: 2012).

Ethnographic research offers several advantages, as researchers are able to 'immerse' themselves in a setting, therefore gaining a rich understanding of social action in various contexts (Reeves, Kuper, and Hodges, 2008:514). Okely, whose ethnographic study generated an informative and valuable insight into Gypsy/Traveller culture, highlights that 'during the process of data gathering, key insights occur during shared activity and experiences' (Okely, 1996).

Ethnography is a method (in its own right) emerging from days, weeks, months, sometimes years, where, as an anthropologist, he or she is not only co-resident, but may work with the relevant people, attend gatherings and witness the joy and grief of lived events (Okely, 1996). This then enables the researcher to gather empirical insights into social practices that are normally hidden from the public gaze (Reeves et al, 2008).

One of the main criticisms levelled at ethnographic studies is the amount of time they take to conduct. Because of its richer output, an ethnographic study will tend to take longer to generate and analyse the data generated than many other methods. Analyzing data produced during fieldwork creates substantial logistical challenges, as even brief episodes of ethnographic research can produce hundreds of pages of field notes or interview transcripts, as well as audio and video recordings, drawings, maps, or objects (Emerson., Fretz., and Shaw, 2011). It therefore differs from a more structured approach, which has an upfront conceptual framework and instrumentation (Hammersley, 1992). The ethnographer must also remember that they are dealing with definitions of the experiences they are observing; so, situations are not given, but 'are made to happen by the participants' (Atkinson, 2014:41). The unpredictability of social life means that at times ethnographers have to be flexible, patient and persistent in their work, as data collection activities can be disrupted or access withdrawn due to social circumstances, situations and politics change (Reeves et al, 2008:514). This method brings the researcher 'face to face' with their own assumptions and ethnocentrisms, enabling them to learn from others as they study (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015:4). Ethnographic fieldwork is therefore shaped by personal and professional identities just as these identities are inevitably shaped by individual experiences while in the field (Hoey,2014).

Using an ethnographic approach

Thinking ethnographically is not just a frame of mind but is also a matter of making sense of what we observe in the field and in the data, we have collected (Hoey, 2014). In using an ethnographic approach, the researcher becomes part of the group to be observed, which involves fitting in, gaining the trust of members of the group and at the same time remaining sufficiently detached. Participative ethnography has benefits to the researcher as it enables her to gather sufficient data in order to give detailed description (Geertz, 2001).

> The ethnographer must be able to become close to the activities and experiences of other people and in order to understand and observe others and must be in the midst of the key sites and scenes of others (Emerson, 2011:2).

‘Research must be judged not just on its validity but also on the basis of its relevance to practical concerns’ (Hammersley, 1992:19).

Ethnographic fieldwork is shaped by personal and professional identities just as these identities are inevitably shaped by individual experiences while in the field (Hoey, 2014). ‘This brings us face to face with our own assumptions and ethnocentrisms, enabling us to learn from others as we study’ (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015:4). In order to gain any sort of understanding of the group experience, and to make this meaningful and important, the field researcher sees from the inside how people lead their lives. In this way, immersion gives the field worker access to the ‘fluidity of others’ lives and enhances her sensitivity to interaction and process’ (Emerson et al, 2011:3). The ethnographer will draw on a range of sources which may also involve gathering a range of data (including artefacts, photos, dairies, alongside transcripts from interviews) which will enable the researcher to throw light on the emerging issues (Hammersley, 1992:3).

Using an ethnographic approach means ‘moving from the perspective of reading over the shoulders of natives, to reading alongside natives, in what Lassiter terms as reciprocal ethnography’ (Lassiter, 2005:3). This is a shift from monolithic writing to more involved dialogue ‘with people’ and not just about them, so that the native point of view is sought out at every point in the text (Lassiter,2005). It is about not focusing on the data from an academic perspective, but of being aware of the power we hold *(ibid.).* What happens to the written material depends on the collaboration; ‘this works better when the collaboration happens from the beginning, although generally the writing up of the work falls to the ethnographer’ (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015:3). For some people, knowing that someone is sufficiently interested in their life to hear their story, can be empowering, and can enhance one's sense of self-worth. However, for this value to be realized, it is important that informants should not feel that they have been exploited and that their story is being used simply to meet the researcher's needs *(ibid.).*

‘In the transition from armchair researcher to fieldworker there is active movement into the culturally worked and lived in space’ (Okely, 2012:108). Generally, ‘an anthropological study is embarked upon by a fieldworker on their own’ (Okely, 2012:5). In this way they are a participant observer, researcher, scribe, analyst, and finally the author *(ibid.).* A disadvantage of using this method and its emergent approach to interviewing, is that it tends to yield very large amounts of information, is time-consuming and does not yield data that lends itself to undertaking comparisons between individual or groups of informants

(Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In ethnographic study, it is methodically crucial to get to know research subjects in depth (Okely, 2012:125). Ethnography usually involves the researcher 'participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews' (Hammersley, 1992:3) and keeping field notes and diaries in order to record conversations and observations. Ethnography, in large part, takes place in and through the field notes, whereas we search for answers to questions about people, we may find ourselves in the stories of others. 'If it is not in there … you do not have it' (Hoey, 2014:6).

'There is criticism that ethnography produces data which is as a result of the participation of the ethnographer rather than a mere reflection of the phenomenon studied and that this is constructed' (Hammersley, 1992:19). Ethnography should therefore include reflexive observation, in that the researcher should demonstrate sensitivity to their own participation in the activities and in the understanding of those being studied through reflective practice.

In this study I chose to use more than one method of data collection, and through the organisation of workshops to facilitate discussion groups, this enabled conversations to flow more naturally and created a more empowering setting than if the focus had been solely on asking direct questions. At the beginning of each session, after the usual preliminary discussions and phatic dialogue (i.e., how are you, what's been happening etc), I introduced the topic that we as a group had agreed on the week before. There were times when this discussion would be triggered by something that had occurred since the previous meeting, such as a TV programme or something that had happened in the community. If it was relevant to the discussion then this was acceptable, if not then I (or other group members) would gently steer the conversation back on course. The use of such an emergent and collaborative approach is consistent with the interpretivist belief that humans have the ability to adapt, and that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context bound social realities (Edirsingha, 2012). I have used a focused research question which does not require an ethnography but lends itself to ethnographic approaches to data generation and analysis.

Power relationships

Using an empowering approach means that the researcher is able to envisage the cultural perspectives of participants, which should be at the forefront of their consciousness (Prosser, 2000:30). There is much criticism of 'rape model' of research, which refers to when a researcher undertakes the study, and then leaves abruptly after collecting the information (McQueeny and Lavelle, 2017). In undertaking research in the community, 'there are concerns

that some researchers have simply 'arrived', 'promising the earth to participants, gained their co-operation, never to be seen again' (Robinson, 2002: 65). 'Driven by ethical concerns about power, exploitation and othering, researchers have developed methods to level power and more fairly represent research participants' (McQueeney and Lavelle, 2017: 81).

As highlighted by Kvale, ideally there should be reciprocity in what the subjects give and what they receive from participation in the study (1996:116). As the researcher, I felt committed to the idea of reciprocation, and by giving something back to participants; I felt it was empowering for them to use their skills and expertise to promote the needs and interests of the very people being researched *(ibid.).* The strength in using a participatory approach is that in this cooperative relationship between participants and researcher, there is a permanent respect for knowledge of the members and for their ability to understand and address the issues. In addition, by using this method, researchers also act as external figures who provide people with the support and resources to do things in ways that fit their own cultural context and their own lifestyles *(ibid.).*

There are complex and intertwined tensions between social constructivism and essentialism; a tension that is at the heart of contemporary collaboration between communities and academy situated intellectuals (Field, 1999). It is not just an issue of representing their interpretations on an equal footing but is about not just focusing on the academic perspective and being aware of the power we hold as the researcher. Being of a white middle-class and professional background, meant I potentially occupied a position of power, both in setting the research agenda and in relation to the analysis of the data. My aim was to encourage participation as a process, enabling people to freely express themselves. In my role as researcher, I was aware that research is inevitably 'value-driven and that its action effects must be assessed' (Wadsworth, 1998:5). 'I wanted participants to take an active role in the research' (McQueeney and Lavelle, 2017:90), where they would be encouraged to talk about their experiences in their own ways (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001) and to be able to provide honest in- depth information that truly reflected their experiences (thus promoting credibility of the data).

'Researchers can also at times be accused of colluding with the more powerful, merely extracting information for their own personal career'(Okely, 2012:145). 'Vulnerable and excluded groups such as Gypsies and Travellers are frequently the subjects of research, who are then left feeling exploited in some way' (Peacock, 2010: 96).
An example of how the community can feel exploited came from Eileen whom I met initially to discuss the ideas of the research project; she said:

> ‘I don’t mind helping you Jane – but it won’t make any difference to us will it?’

I could not, of course, promise that the findings would make any difference to the lives of the group, but I told Eileen that my aim was for them to enjoy participating in the workshops and that I hoped that they would feel a sense of achievement having done so. ‘There are ways in which the fieldworker learns how to reciprocate appropriately for what has been given and shared’ (Okely, 2012:145).

By being an active participant myself my aim was to ensure that I was not being seen as superior in my role as researcher but was part of the group and on an equal footing as far as possible. Having consulted with the participants (and at their request), I took responsibility for the arrangement of the workshops, planning the activities, accessing resources and buying equipment. In addition, this involved setting up the hall appropriately, and providing refreshments and lunch – ensuring this was prepared according to the community’s choice and cultural preferences. This arose mainly because the community members were reluctant to make these arrangements themselves. Some participants took responsibility for distributing flyers and leaflets through letterbox and using social media systems to let people know about future dates and also in sourcing and booking an alternative venue when the usual hall was unavailable. I regularly invited contributions from the group on how they wanted future workshops to be conducted, what they wanted to do and if there were any additional resources or materials that were needed. This approach led to the participants being able to provide me with what I felt was their honest opinion which truly reflected their views, which ‘counters the myth that researchers collude with the more powerful, merely extracting information for their own personal career’ (Okely, 2012:145).

My original plan was to encourage the group to work on the whole study from the planning of the workshops, through to the finish data analysis. Although I ensured that my field notes and discussion transcripts were available for any of the participants to see, and at times referred to these openly in the group, people were not interested in going into any detail about the content. An example of this was the discussion I tried to generate by raising the question of legislation. I had produced a poster displaying a time line of the legislation over the centuries and how this impacted on G/R/T groups; despite what I felt was an attractive visual display, which included a model of a Gypsy cob and a Vardo, I was surprised that no one in the group were interested in looking at it - despite it being displayed near to where they were working. When I asked the participants about it, they replied that they would look at it ‘later’. However, I observed that this didn’t happen, despite encouragement from myself. This emphasised to

me that the group felt comfortable to make their own choices in an honest and open manner. To me, this example means that the group did not feel pressurised to look at my display, even out of a sense of courtesy, or that they were worried that they would offend me if they did not. They simply were not interested and therefore chose not to look at it. Despite my intention to enable participants to work with me on the final analysis, I found that whilst participation in the events was enthusiastic, the group were not motivated to work with me on interpreting the analysis. They chose instead to represent their ideas by showcasing their final work in an exhibition to celebrate Gypsy/Roma/Traveller month, and to run some community workshops for the local community at this event. In this way, participants made their own choices about how they wanted some of the findings to be shared with the general public.

Hearing the participant's voice was fundamental to this study because as a minority ethnic group, Gypsies often experience exclusion and prejudice from the sedentary population and are subsequently without a voice (Okely, 1983; Acton,1997; Powell, 2013). As G/R/T groups occupy a marginalised place in society, their perceived lack of trust and defensiveness could be explained as a natural defence or self-preservation built up over many years of prejudicial experiences (Acton and Gallant, 1997; Bancroft 2005; Powell, 2016).

Ethical issues – consent, and confidentiality

Ethical decisions do not belong to a separate stage of interview investigations but arise throughout the research process (Kvale, 1996:110). Ethical consideration must be given into how the research may affect the people whose experiences, perceptions, behaviours, attitudes, are the focus of the study, and who are the designated 'research population' (Sikes, 2008). Researchers will often have long-term experiences of the setting being studied, its history, and other information which has led to their interest to pursue the subject (Hammersley, 2014) and to their own particular methodological and theoretical approaches (Hoey, 2014:4).

In qualitative research, ethical principles are primarily centred on protecting research participants and the guiding foundation of "do no harm". This includes demonstrating:

- Respect for persons – Respecting the autonomy, decision-making and dignity of participants.
- Beneficence - Minimizing the risks (physically, psychologically and socially) and maximizing the benefits to research participants.
- Justice - Participants should be selected from groups of people whom the research may benefit.

- Respect for communities - Protect and respect the values and interests of the community as a whole and protect the community from harm.

Table 4.2: Miller et al, 2012:3

By giving each participant and volunteers a pseudonym I demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the anonymity of participants and to protecting the group from exploitation as a result of the research process. Reliability and validity were gained through member checking by returning the transcripts to the participants to check for accuracy of interpretation (Flick, 2007).

From the outset of the transcription of the group discussions and interviews, each participant was given a pseudonym by me in order to protect their anonymity. To prevent individual interviewees from being recognised, material generated from the interviews was kept anonymous and data generated from this process was not raised in the general group discussions. Once I had transferred the recordings into transcripts, I then re-read the material alongside my field notes; if I had any questions about the material, I addressed these either with the group or privately with the individual as appropriate.
Delving into personal details with people, creates ethical dilemmas which are no less significant or real for being unanticipated (Sikes, 2008). As researchers, we have a responsibility to the community and our respective disciplines to fulfil our commitment and to finish what we started (Lassiter, 2005:33).

Participants were made aware, 'in ways in which they could understand, that information they shared was being recorded and would be used re-presented in the final report' (Floyd and Arthur, 2012:102). Both researchers and participants need to understand that private issues shared in research, also become public matters (Sikes, 2008). Ethical issues and concerns are generally understood to be associated with:

- what constitutes a 'legitimate' focus/topic of research
- the conduct of (all stages and aspects of) the research
- the behaviour of researchers
- standards and/or codes of practice; in short, with 'acceptable' ways of doing things
- broad issues of 'voice', values and validity (Sikes, 2008:90)

Informed consent is at the heart of ethical research (Department of Health 2005b), as its purpose is to ensure explicit agreement by participants to participate in the research process after receiving and comprehending information regarding the nature of research (Hewitt, 2007). One of the core principles of ethical research is that of informed consent. Ensuring that

research participants are fully informed and aware of what involvement in a research project entails and consent without coercion are fundamental to ethical research practice (Rose, 2011: 123).

Consent 'entails informing the research subjects about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design as well as possible risks alongside the benefits from participation' (Kvale, 1996:112). 'As far as possible, sociological research should be based upon the freely given informed consent of those studied' (Davies, 1999:46). The researcher is responsible for explaining as freely as possible, and in meaningful terms to the participants why the work is being undertaken, who has commissioned the research and what will happen to the results.

The difficulty of explaining the aims of the project in ethnographic research is that at the beginning, researchers do not know at the outset all the potential aspects. In fact, the theoretical focus may shift as different sort of data become more relevant and different or unexpected themes emerge. Researchers should ensure that the respondents understand that research in this manner 'is always a process of discovery' (Davies,1999:47). By reminding participants of this in the course of the project, they are enabled to make more informed decisions about whether or not they wish to participate, or in the case of a longer-term project, whether they want to continue.

When undertaking research in the community, it is crucial to demonstrate an awareness of relevant health and safety issues which may arise, not only for the researcher, but also the participants. Although risks to participants can be minimised by undertaking interviews in a suitable location, such as, for example, a local community hall, or by prior arrangement in the participants' homes, this does not fully eradicate the risk to those being interviewed, as they are exposed to related risks for example, to the potential of having personal, confidential information overheard by friends and family members. At the choice of respondents, some interviews were conducted in my car, which provided a safe space where conversations were private and could not be overheard.

All of those involved as volunteers, including myself as the lead researcher, hold enhanced disclosure and barring (DBS) checks recognising that they are safe and appropriate adults to work with adults and children.

The main concern in undertaking research in a community is that the material gained is kept confidential, and that participants understand what will happen to the shared information. To truly understand an aspect of reality pertaining to people, their perspective must be explored as they perceive and describe it, without external interference (Kvale, 1996). Respondents should not be made to feel that their privacy has been invaded, or that information about them may have been obtained without their knowledge or consent or used in ways of which they would disapprove (Davies, 1999).

Participants were informed that the recorded interviews and discussions would be transcribed, and that all the material created would be fully anonymised. I explained that (anonymised) extracts may be used in the production of written reports or papers from the study, and participants consented to this. In order to ensure that people remembered the focus of the project, at the start of every session (both workshops and interviews), I reminded respondents why I was there, why I was conducting this research and what I planned to do with the findings. The participants were given the opportunity to question the purpose of the research, what would happen to the material generated and also the chance to reframe their responses if they so wished; I opened every discussion by revisiting points raised the previous time.

In order to gain their informed consent, I ensured the participants understood the research questions by reading them aloud at each workshop, explaining again the nature and reason for my research. The consent forms were brought to every session and those which had been completed were kept in a secure file. New members were given the opportunity to give their informed verbal and written consent (or not as they chose) by following this process. This also enabled participants to ask questions and to share their views as to how the project was going. The wishes of any participants who chose not to be interviewed were respected.

Using stories, allowed for discussion and contributions from the group rather than just individual responses. In addition to this, stories and criticisms of others were (at times) a feature in the workshop conversations, and there were occasions when these needed to be curtailed, especially if they involved people who were not there at the time. For Atkinson, 'rumour and gossip are distinctive forms of narrative and accounts; gossip is a powerful form of social control when used to denigrate those in the peer group' (Atkinson, 2014:64). By using a code of conduct, we agreed that there would not be discussions about other people who were not present in the workshops. This needed to be affirmed as the weeks went by and various situations arose in the community. In terms of maintaining confidentiality, I realized that I would not have control over confidentiality surrounding what was being said outside the group, and that participants may evaluate each other's contributions without me knowing. I

therefore needed to be aware of how 'reputations and characters are established or challenged through the circulation of gossip' (Atkinson, 2014:65).

Data Protection and GDPR 2018

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and new Data Protection Act came into force on 25th May 2018. Both pieces of legislation now govern the holding and using of personal data in the UK (Summers, 2018). This requires the researcher to only process personal data that is necessary (data minimisation) and anonymizing or pseudonymizing where possible *(ibid.).* Everyone working with identifiable information should understand the importance of confidentiality and should hold data securely with an appropriate level of protection. In research, consent is generally sought from those who are participating. Consent needs to be freely given, informed, unambiguous, specific and by a clear affirmative action that signifies agreement to the processing of personal data (Summers, 2018). Consent to participate in research can also give participants control over how their data is used. Respondents need to be informed about what will be done with the data and how this will be processed. Processes should be followed in a manner that ensures personal data is secure, and is protected against unlawful use, accidental loss and destruction (Summers, 2018). In addition, the data collected should be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary *(ibid.).*

Participants were given the opportunity to freely participate and were not coerced to do so. They needed to understand the purpose of the research study from the outset, in terms of what we would be doing, what I wanted to know, and what would happen at the end. Each person who participated in any of the interviews and workshops gave their informed consent. In addition, those who agreed to display their work as part of the exhibition also gave their individual consent to their material (or images of them) being used.

In order to respect the privacy of the participants, volunteers and artists, pseudonyms have been applied to all those involved and are used throughout. In research, confidentiality implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported; by changing participants names and not highlighting the specific location of the community I was able to protect the privacy of the participants (Kvale, 1996).

My position

Validity is an important factor in successful and effective research, as if research is not valid, then it is judged worthless (Cohen, 2014). The researcher's role is therefore crucial to ensuring the validity of research. But it is important to consider what constitutes valid research and how can the researcher ensure validity as this is open to debate and scrutiny. It is problematic because of philosophical questions underlying the validity concept.

Alongside issues of race or status, social class and age are also a feature in the research process (Fontana, 1994). 'The personal history of myself as the fieldworker will affect the process, interaction and emergent material of the study' (Okely and Callaway, 1992:3). Difficulties exist when researchers are located within a professional culture that positions them as being in a powerful position (Bines and Lei, 2011). There are therefore differences between the cultural backgrounds of myself as a professional, and the racial background of the community, and people may feel misunderstood or voiceless (Mattingly and Lawlor, 2000).

Knowledge is constructed through the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale, 1996:127). In terms of collecting data, I was aware that the interviews were not a reciprocal interaction of two equal partners (Kvale, 1996:126). As the researcher I decided on the subject matter, designed the interview questions and the process by which data would be generated. Despite the fact that these methods had gained approval from my supervisors, I was aware that there was still a power differential between myself and members of the community. This led to me deciding to use discussion groups in order to complement the interview methods.

Qualitative research demands emotional labour; researchers at times may need to be aware of the need to balance their emotions and not be overly sympathetic, as this may affect their views and cause them to lose focus on their critical analysis. (Mc Queeney and Lavelle, 2017). Researchers working with marginalised and disenfranchised groups, often find themselves in the middle of a short or long-term crisis (Checker et al, 2014). 'Ongoing poverty, systemic discrimination, changes in welfare systems, and human disasters 'can all threaten the lives and livelihoods of those we study' (Checker et al, 2014:1). An example of this is the introduction of Universal Credit (the new benefit system) to welfare provision, and the cuts in financial support (such as bedroom tax), all of which dominated the discussions when I first met with the community. As a fieldworker, 'it was clear that I could become engaged with the fate of respondents and that I would find myself allied to those who have been, or who are relatively powerless' (Okely, 2012:145), factors which required me to respond appropriately. At the

same time, I needed to strike a balance between being so preoccupied with my own project, that I could become indifferent or complacent about the day to day and lived problems of others, whilst recognising the limitations of my current position. There were times when I grappled with the dilemma of being powerless to intervene. 'As practitioners of a methodology that emphasises personal attachment, our first instinct is to leap headlong into a crisis' (Checker et al, 2014:1). The autobiography of the fieldworker cannot operate in a cultural vacuum or should be confined to their own culture. 'Instead, it should be an important aspect of a cross-cultural analysis' (Okely, 1997:2). The researcher's emotions and experiences have been recognised as an important source of insight to be taken into consideration within qualitative research. There is no longer the need to exclude himself/herself, nor his/her past experiences, prior knowledge or prevailing emotions. Field work is not just an exercise in empathic commentary on a given social problem, nor just about exploring social injustices, and there were times when the complex needs of the group and their social problems and discrimination became a distraction from my research aims (Atkinson, 2014). Experience and knowledge are regarded as necessary in relation to analysing and interpreting the issues being researched. Most fieldworkers 'report experiencing emotional extremes, from 'great exaltation, to serious feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt' (Davies, 1999:83). It is arguable that researchers who avoid relying on their personal emotions and life experience when sharing the research story can at least to a certain extent be considered dishonest (Watts, 2008, cited in Marcu, et al 2016).

Facilitating discussion groups

Leading (and recording) informal discussions with groups provides an extremely flexible research method. However, there are 'very elastic boundaries, which can lead to deviation' (Morgan, 1998:35). There is the potential that the group can stray off course and that discussions can become inflammatory in some way, and I needed to be aware of this.

There is a tension when working with groups who may not share the same views – on social justice (for example) and there are times when these may clash (McQueeney and Lavelle, 2017). As group work 'embodies all the challenges of human social interaction, such as personality conflicts, differing expectations, anxieties about being criticised by more dominant members and varying levels of resistance, all of which affect the functioning of the group' (Hodges, 2017:2). An example of this is when (Mary, see Chapter 5) spoke negatively about the study group 'not being real Gypsies'. In addition, participants may fear contributing because of potential judgment from the other members of the group *(ibid.).* Theories of why collaboration in groups may fail include those based on cognitive as well as social challenges

(Nokes-Malach et al, 2015). It is important that participants feel supported and that specific members of the group do not gain the most attention, and that participation is encouraged from everyone who wants to join in with the discussion.

I have found in my past experiences of community work, there is generally dialogue which precedes further conversation, usually centering around when we last met, catching up on local news and invariably includes discussion around how long we have known one another, so I anticipated that this might happen. Adopting a formal approach does not allow for engagement with marginalised groups and it seems that this conversational aspect of the dialogue with this community, described by Thompson (2003:12) as 'phatic conversation' is of high importance to the process of building rapport. In the data generation, I needed to decide as to what constituted 'deviation'. For example, if an interviewee talked about her childhood and travelling experiences, this was relevant to the research topic, as childhood experiences impact on a person's health beliefs and behaviours (Marmot and Wilkinson,2006). But if they started to gossip about their neighbours, share racist or bigoted opinions (for example), I guided the conversation back to the interview topic. The use (on occasions) of set topics helped to promote discussion and encourage the telling of stories and anecdotal contributions from the group. The role of the researcher using an ethnographic approach is to use their emotional reflexivity to understand the meanings that subjects bring to the discussion and to understand why these may have arisen (McQueeney and Lavelle, 2017). The aim of using this ethnographic approach in my study, was for the emerging data to portray the story of their identity, and for me to learn in what ways their cultural identity is expressed and has survived despite their accommodation status.

There were many occasions where respondents voiced their opinions on how the workshops should run and what they wanted to create, and what materials they wanted me to provide and I respected their wishes as far as possible. The limitations placed on the study, raises the issue of exploitation; as Johnsen (2010: 169) points out, 'I often found myself asking: I know what I am getting out of this experience, but what are they getting out of it?' Undeniably, I am the key beneficiary of the research with an inescapable power over the collection and subsequent analysis of the data. However, I ensured that the group benefitted out of the process. Using an emancipatory stance helped me to promote opportunities to discuss and reflect on people's experiences. Although it is difficult to assess how empowering this was for them, either individually or collectively, it is argued that the chance to make their experiences known and to reflect upon these experiences was, in-itself, a form of empowerment (Johnsen, 2010). Through discussion, and the group's interaction it was clear that people did not feel disempowered and that they saw me as a combination of someone they could relate to, and at

the same time someone who was able to advocate be for them. This community group clearly felt able to express their opinions openly and in order to respect their wishes, I ensured necessary changes were made in the course of the project accordingly.

Power

Power is a dynamic and negotiated process shaped by race, class, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, sexuality, education, control, and other factors (Foucault 1982, cited by McQueeney and Lavelle, 2017:84). The research environment is, more often than-not, compounded by the 'biologically situated researcher' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:23), who necessarily works from a position of privilege imposing the perspectives of her 'own historical research tradition' on the 'Other' (Naples, 2003, cited by Liebenberg, 2009: 442).

Bhopal (2008) argues that power relations can never be fully equalised in the research process; however, this power difference can be ameliorated by researchers who are knowledgeable, sensitive, and conscientious (Peternalj-Taylor 2005). The conversation in a research interview is not the reciprocal interaction of two equal partners as there is a definite asymmetry of power (Kvale, 1996:126). Although I did not intend for this research to be influenced by myself, I recognised that I was central to the research process in terms of the planning and facilitating of sessions. As a registered social worker and an academic I am in a powerful position, with an air of 'officialdom'. This impacts on and influences the power relations between myself as a practitioner from a dominant culture, and the participants from this specific cultural background (Helman, 2007).

As the researcher I was responsible for introducing the topics for discussion and through further questioning I steered the course of both the interview and the discussions where appropriate (Kvale, 1996). From the start, I was open and honest with participants regarding my reasons for undertaking this research and I remained faithful to using new ways of seeing vulnerability through the participants' experiences (Tremlett, 2013). Asking participants to share private, personal accounts, with honest in- depth information that truly reflects their experience (thus promoting credibility of the data), requires the researcher to truly value participants and their contributions. I feel the success of the workshops and the level of participation of the group provides evidence of the value I placed on peoples' contributions.

Visiting people in their own homes has given me an understanding of how different families and communities operate. I was therefore prepared for the nature of the 'Open Door' (Tremlett, 2013) aspect of the community. I had previously experienced that during the one-

to-one interviews, other family members may well be present or would possibly make an unplanned visit, and that this may involve them staying to chat with the participant and engage in conversation with myself. Being prepared for this not only enabled me to adapt and respond positively, but it also meant that I was flexible in my approach and prepared for unplanned distractions, which arose at times. I know from my previous contact with Gypsy communities with whom I have worked, that if I am accepted by someone, then it is likely that I will be accepted by their whole family. The word-of-mouth culture within the community and strong networks mean that inadvertently putting a foot wrong at the beginning, will threaten the building of future relationships, which highlights the importance of creating a positive impression from the start.

Stories and Arts based enquiry

'Stories provide an opportunity to develop meanings and are a ubiquitous and powerful tool in the construction of identity' (Belton, 2005:115). Oral tradition, the passing of information, traditions, legends through the use of story and narrative from one generation to the next, is a constant and integral part of Gypsy culture (Okely,1983; Clark and Greenfields, 2006). Using stories and narratives allowed for discussion and contributions from the group rather than just individual interview responses. By ensuring a safe private area was available for interviews, and by being hyper-sensitive to signals via nonverbal communication and dialogue which may indicate that someone was likely to become distressed, the vulnerability of individuals was protected as far as possible. We bring stories together and these stories then shape the collective meaning 'the story is the net by which we capture experience.' (Belton, 2005:115).

Because the group had expressed an interest in participating in creative activities, I decided to use a community arts approach to both initiate and promote narrative and discussions. Using art in the community, is an important motivator, in particular, for isolated and vulnerable people. Using visual records in research adds texture and detail to interview situations and generally provides what has been termed 'extra somatic memory' (Prosser and Loxley, 2008:69). The use of visual methods in social science research has become popular, and 'creative techniques are widely recognised as having the potential to evoke more nuanced understanding of the ways in which other people experience their worlds' (Mannay, 2014:3). Visual representation enables experiences and meanings to become more tangible, and to be understood in ways that other conventional forms of communication may not necessarily allow *(ibid.).* 'Through use of visual material, researchers may discover and demonstrate components of community lives that may be subtle or easily overlooked'

(Mannay, 2014:3). 'Although they are often accompanied by talk, and sometimes used within an interview context, these methods draw heavily on observational techniques developed by social anthropologists and ethnographers' (Burgess, 1984:14). It is important to acknowledge that the knowledge produced through methods other than standard interviewing is less constructed or more directly representational than verbal interview methods. Burgess argues that 'using non-verbal methods should help to create conditions appropriate for the generation of such knowledge' *(ibid.).*

Including images that participants themselves have created, provides an opportunity that is established for them to literally see what respondents are talking about (Liebenberg, 2009). 'The use of images within the research process, and as part of a larger narrative process, also served to inspire a new collaboration between the group' and myself as a researcher (Liebenberg, 2009:446). The creation of material objects crafted by participants meant that the community were able to express themselves in ways that they may not have been able to do using the written word or even dialogue. More complex ideas were conveyed in this way, 'in terms the feelings people get from creating them, and also the questions they raise to people' (Baker, 2014 cited by Murtagh, 2015, no page).

Arts and culture are powerful tools with which to engage communities. 'They are a means to public dialogue and contribute to the development of a community's creative learning' (Creative city Network of Canada, 2005:2). The art workshops provided a creative research method and a unique opportunity for this community to generate a range of ideas through accessing the resources provided. This was an innovative process that generated rich and valuable data about the lived experiences and customs of the community members. Using this method as part of my research project stimulated a more creative experience for the participants and the intention was that artefacts such as paintings and craft items would be used as part of the gathering of information, to promote discussions, and encourage narrative and storytelling. Working with images can thicken interpretation. Images can evoke emotions and imaginative identification, too often lacking in social science writing (Kohler-Reissman, 2008). 'Art is an important motivator and can be highly satisfying' (Matthews, 2009:49), 'helping to foster a sense of identity and belonging, increased self-esteem and self-confidence, improved communication and social skills and the development of leadership skills' (Ramsden., Milling., Phillimore., McCabe., Fyfe, and Simpson, 2011: 46).

There was never a prescribed topic for the art workshops, and participants were free to choose to use to create whatever they wanted. The ability of drawings to surface unspoken thoughts and feelings has long been accepted by art therapists who have used this tool for

many decades. However, there was no intention to use a therapeutic approach to the analysis of the work, rather that the art would give participants an opportunity to engage in activities they would not normally do. I was aware however, that in the process of creating their work, there may be occasions when people wanted to share emotional experiences which they may have been unable to do in their day to day lives, and I ensured that there was a safe environment for them to do so. (Mc Queeney and Lavelle, 2017).

'Through artistic acts, using imagery, cultural identity can be recreated and reclaimed, encouraging more informed understanding' (Baker, cited by Murtagh, 2015:no page). Participation in the arts is an effective route for personal growth, leading to enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments which can improve people's social contracts and employability (Matarasso, 2003); in addition, it can help validate the contribution of a whole community, promote intercultural contact and cooperation and improve perceptions of marginalised groups *(ibid.).* 'Making and sharing things can make a positive contribution to wellbeing and a sense of connectedness' (Gauntlett, 2018:58). People choose to do arts and crafts often do so as a reaction and want to see a project through from the beginning to end, something they may not get to do in their daily lives (Gschwandtner 2007, cited by Gauntlett, 2018:64). In a creative project, those participating can see something from start to finish, and have a material product which they can keep for themselves or give away as they choose. Although they may gain pleasure from the finished object, 'it is the doing it which really counts' (Gauntlett, 2018:70).

Respondents were active participants in all of the methods used. The intention was to build knowledge through collaborative processes 'while avoiding the imposition of theoretical or academic priorities to the research field … with the core aim of giving voice to marginalised groups' (Bergold and Thomas, 2012: 33).

How images are seen and read, is 'shaped by the values, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that both photographer and viewer bring with them' (Liebenberg, 2009:445). My interpretation of the data generated is subjective, and as I witnessed the creation of the artefacts and images and listened to the discussion and interviews, I was aware that others viewing the work will have their own more objective ideas. In order to enable the reader to make their own assessments (as highlighted by Morley, 1980, and Gray., Oré de Boehm., Farnsworth., and Wolf, 2010), I have used large amounts of transcript in order to support my analysis and interpretations. 'This subjective nature of the meaning of images underscores the importance of researcher–participant interaction in the research process' (Harper, 2003, cited by Liebenberg, 2009:446).

There is increasing recognition of the use of arts activities as a means of creating knowledge and developing understanding in other spheres of living:

> 'Involvement in creative expression has the potential of engaging individuals in personal and community level change through reflection, empowerment, and the facilitation of connectedness. It is a process that can be a powerful component of community based participatory research as it can facilitate and support the principles of co-learning, egalitarian relationships, and respect for non-academic knowledge' (Gray et al, 2010:2).

All cultural and ethnic groups have histories of creative and artistic expression. Traditions have been passed down through the generations that include methods of communicating belongingness, creating group cohesion, and maintaining community identity (Gray et al, 2010:4).

Drawings can 'focus a person's response' and lead to 'respondent honesty and parsimony' (Kearney and Hyle, 2004:4). Imagery can 'bridge the gap between the individual, subjective, and the apparently collective, social, political' (Samuels, 1993: 63). In working with communities there is a need to develop and examine creative and innovative participatory methods and frameworks for engaging people (Yonas et al, 2009).

Reaching the community and introducing the workshops

In order to gain and sustain access into what is often described as a 'hard- to-reach' group (Foley 2010; in February 2016, I met with community worker (Elise), from a locally based voluntary organisation to discuss the initial purpose of my research, knowing this would need a sensitive approach and to be attractive to the community to encourage participation. In order to meet bureaucratic requirements such as ensuring that health and safety, public and professional liability insurance, safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, the project was attached to a local voluntary organization, known both to me and the community in question. This would enable me to access the group of people living in this community in their own neighbourhood and would also enable me to provide a safe, accessible and welcoming environment in which to conduct the interviews. Collaboration with this organization gave me access to support from volunteers, enabled me to meet the relevant health and safety requirements, public and professional liability insurance requirements and provided access to a suitable meeting place. In addition, participants could access a neutral environment which would offer a safe place for them to meet.

My first step was to ensure that the community agreed for me to use the group meetings as a vehicle for the research. I had the idea of providing creative workshops and conducting interviews during the sessions. Elise arranged publicity using her existing networks and her social media page, to which the community have access. In 1994, I had set up a small, registered charity, using this to fund play- schemes and other small events. I successfully applied for some funding to contribute towards the rent of a local hall, the overall costs of art and craft resources and equipment to run the project.

Contacts with Gypsies in Village A were established through attendance at events such as a session on health prevention, a culture evening and other community events to which I was invited. By attending these events I was able to establish a rapport with a variety of members of the community, and not just those of whom I had prior knowledge. Having gained the funding, I then met with some of the community whom Elise felt would be key in encouraging others to attend, and who may act as community consultants (Convery, Davis, and Corsane, 2012). In June 2016, I met with Chrissie, Eileen, Nancy and Bob to discuss the project. They readily agreed with my proposal and to participate in the research and were interested in the arts and craft sessions. Nancy added that she felt the workshops would give people an opportunity to meet up, and that she felt 'they are still a strong community, still quite connected.' When I met with this small group, I observed that Eileen and Chrissie appeared to enjoy talking about what they referred to as the 'old days'. They made some suggestions of things they wanted to create – including making a Gypsy caravan sewing box and weaving some reed baskets – the traditional 'calling baskets' that their mothers and grandmothers had used to sell flowers door to door. I noticed that Eileen's face lit up and that her voice became animated when she talked about the past and recalled stories – for example of how as children they used to work on a local farm, potato picking: -

> 'You were out in the fresh air all day earning a shilling – they were great days; you could just do your own thing' (Eileen).

Nancy said it would be good to have something positive for the community to engage in. She added that she was very interested in the project and said:

> 'I'm a Gypsy – the most hated culture. My ancestors were immigrants. In the old days you could be killed for being a Gypsy' (Nancy).

Following a successful initial meeting, the hall was booked with dates and times agreed. We planned that the sessions would run from 10.00 – 2.00 to allow for school drop offs and this would include a community lunch each week.

The workshops were open to the whole community and Elise sent invitations through the postal system to all those on her mailing list a few days in advance of each event. In view of the lack of other more instant means of communication flyers, were sent through the post, and, where possible, were also distributed in advance at the workshops. Transport was arranged between us for those who would have difficulty in accessing the meeting place. Of a population of approximately 184 at the time of the research (Arnold, 2009), a total number of 36 participants regularly attended the workshops. Others whom attended were Lou and Elise, (community workers) and community artists Jackie and Helen, and Om who prepared the refreshments. Regular attendance at the workshops varied, although a core group of 19 attended every session. The discussions which took place were recorded using my Smart phone and a recording App. Each participant was aware of the fact that the conversations were being recorded. If anyone objected to this at any point, then the device was turned off and the soundbite erased. There were also photographs of the workshops for which every participant gave their consent. Arrangements for interviews were made in advance, with a location which was accessible to the community; the hall was conducive to gaining accurate information, as there was a main room and a quiet and private area for the interviews. Kvale,(1996:161), argues that video recording interviews provides richer contexts for interpretations than does audio recording. Using video would have added a further dimension to the work in terms of including the visual aspects of the setting, providing the ability to closely analyse the verbal and non-verbal expressions of the participants, alongside a background to the community and the location. Although all but one of the participants were happy to be audio recorded, and everyone was happy for photos to be taken of them and their work, the group did not want to be videoed and I respected this request.

The Interviews

Although ethnographers aim to keep an open mind about the group or culture they are studying, it is inevitable that they will come to the table with some preconceived ideas and notions about how people behave. There were some aspects of prior knowledge which were useful to me in planning the workshops. I knew, for example, that the group enjoyed having lunch together, so I was able to prepare for this by including the costs of suitable refreshments in my grant application. Also knowing that they enjoyed meeting as a group and engaging in arts and crafts was useful in terms of planning ahead.

19 people aged between 18 – 85, all of whom identified themselves as Gypsies were interviewed. The majority live in local authority housing, within the same small

neighbourhood. In considering health and safety issues and concerns about visiting participants in their own homes, I ensured that my electronic diary (recording my appointments) was kept up to date, detailing my visits and in addition, I informed the community worker so that she knew whom I was visiting. She agreed to be the designated contact at the start and end of interviews. The benefits of interviewing people in their homes or in a location familiar to them outweigh the risks – it empowers participants to share their stories in a safe environment. Some respondents chose for their interviews to take place in my car, which was discreetly parked outside the community building at some distance from the front doors. This method proved to be successful and guaranteed confidentiality as the conversation could not be overheard.

Seven interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents, whilst the others took place at various times during the workshops, either in a private space in the hall or in my car (parked outside) when this was not possible or at the respondent's request. Interviews in two cases, involved more than one family member. Most individual interviews lasted between 25 – 45 minutes and these were all recorded and subsequently transcribed. Due to the fact that relying on memory has its limitations (Kvale, 1996:161), there were some incidences where I also made some notes while the respondent was talking. As I also needed to demonstrate sensitivity to the respondent by demonstrating that I was actively listening to what they were saying and to ensure I had captured the essence of the content, there were some times when I recorded my thoughts on a voice memo after the interviews or the workshops as a reminder. This was also a useful technique for remembering what I needed to do for the following session and for monitoring how the project was going. I was aware of the fact that in my role as the researcher who had designed the questionnaire (approved by the university ethics committee), I could inadvertently (or intentionally) lead interviewees into responding in a certain way. The wording of a question can shape the content of an answer (Kvale, 1996), and there were times when I needed to rephrase the question or to ask supplementary questions in order to gain relevant information and to ensure validity. If a participant was reluctant to respond, then I moved onto the following questions.

The results of the analysis of these transcripts form the bulk of what is presented in the Findings section of this paper. There was also an ethnographic element to the research and informal discussions with Gypsies and visits to Gypsy sites, recorded in field notes, are also drawn upon. Recordings were transferred to my password encrypted computer and were deleted once they had been transcribed. As I am the sole user of my desktop, the material was not likely to be seen by another person and was additionally password protected. The recording of each interview and workshop was transcribed verbatim, creating written notes

which contributed to the data analysis. All the artwork was digitally photographed and then saved to my PC, alongside anonymized interview notes, fieldnotes and transcripts. The written transcripts of the interviews were reviewed line by line and themes and categories were then identified (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The transcripts were then re-reviewed against these initial themes to identify relationships or themes across all the data generated. In addition to the interviews, field notes and transcripts, I used photographs of the groups and the crafts they had made. 'Photos reveal characteristics and attributes of people, objects and events that often elude a researcher' (Jensen, 2011:145). By looking at these, I was able to observe people in the groups, and reflect and analyse what they had made that I may otherwise have overlooked.

An unexpected outcome of the project was that the community said they wanted to exhibit their artwork. At their request, together we planned a community event and exhibition to celebrate Gypsy/ Roma/Traveller month at a local arts centre, where group members facilitated a range of workshops to the general community. This proved to be a valuable asset to the project and the event provided both a celebration of the community's work, together with a suitable ending to the research project.

How I undertook the Data Analysis

The researcher does not just leave the field with mountains of empirical data and then write up his or her findings - qualitative interpretations are constructed, and various techniques can be used to make sense of the data, such as thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns from responses or data, which allows the researcher to organise and describe the data in detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is a process for encoding qualitative information. The themes may be initially generated from the raw material or generated deductively from theory and data collection. Braun and Clark suggest that the researcher takes a few minutes to reflect at the beginning of the analysis: -

- the assumptions, if any, they hold about the research topic
- their values and life experiences, and how all this might shape how they read and interpret the data (Braun and Clark, 2013: 4).

There are a variety of techniques to aid the analytic process and exploration of the social life of this community (Van Cleemput, 2007). Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. From the conversations that happen in the field work, ideas

emerge that can be better understood under the control of a thematic analysis, which focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour. From the transcribed conversations, I selected sections of text which related to a specific topic. The topics came from direct quotes or the paraphrasing of common ideas. All of the text that fitted under a specific pattern was identified and placed with the corresponding pattern. For example, each person that was interviewed in the course of my field work talked about freedom, so that became a theme (Aronson, 1992). Using a thematic analysis to examine the conversations that took place in the setting enabled ideas to emerge which were then to easier to follow and understand. Initially, I coded inter-related themes which, although I felt were directly connected with the research question, I found they overlapped at times.

Although having some basic ideas of what to expect from the study does not imply any lack of rigour (Fetterman, 2010:2), these factors will, without doubt, influence our work. The main challenge was sifting through the vast amount of data, and the richness of this left me finding it challenging to separate what I wanted to use and what was most relevant to the research question. I found Hoey's ethnographic template useful to refer to in managing my field notes:

Description of activity	Who what when where why and how
Reflections	Own Positionality, meanings
Analyses	Potential lines of inquiry, theories, common narratives
Future Action	Including further contacts, Include timescales

Table 4.3: Ethnographic template (Hoey, 2014)

This framework enabled me to reduce the amount of data into a more manageable set of themes, with a clearer and identifiable distinction between them (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I then condensed the material into separate events and 'to see the recurring patterns which then pulled together many separate pieces of data' (Miles and Huberman, 2002:246). Using the template to create stories of the workshops, enabled me to see the emerging patterns and ensure that the analysis was consistent. I removed any material which was not part of the research study, such as stories and recollections of my encounters with the community in the past. Once the themes were identified and the relevant literature studied and interwoven with the findings, I was able to construct a developed story line to help the reader to comprehend the process, understanding, and motivation of the interviewer (Aronson, 1992).

Analysis of Field notes

The first step was reading through the transcribed interviews and workshop discussions. Ethnographic writing includes a great deal of detailed description, presented in narrative form (Fetterman, 2010). The purpose of description is to let the reader know what happened in the field, what it was like from the participants' point of view to be there, and what particular events or activities were interesting and worth exploring further. A detailed description (balanced by analysis and interpretation) are essential qualities of ethnographic accounts *(ibid.).* An interesting and readable ethnographic report provides sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the analysis and allow the reader to understand the interpretation and explanation presented.

- Analyzing data and being able to make sense of the material involves several tasks:
- Discovering themes and subthemes
- Winnowing themes to a manageable number and then excising which
- themes are important
- Building hierarchies of themes or codes
- Linking these to theoretical models

(Ryan and Bernard, 2003:85)

Coding begins with the ethnographer mentally asking questions of specific pieces of field notes and drawing on a wide variety of resources (Emerson et al, 2011). I used the transcripts from the recordings of the interviews and discussions and field observations in a systematic way. These then became categories and themes, which linked back to my research questions; then, according to their similarity they were given a name (Gibbs, 2007).

The initial reading of the material helped to gain an overall picture of the data. After some rounds of reading, I made notes on the texts in order to trace patterns, connections, similarities, or contrastive points (Charmaz, 2006), which gave me a deeper level of understanding. At the end of this lengthy process I had a good idea of the different themes, how they fit together, and the overall story they tell (Braun and Clarke, 2006). There were vast amounts of data additional to the field notes (e.g. hundreds of pages of notes, memos and photographs). In the initial stages of data selection, although the purpose of the description was to let the reader know what happened in the field, what it was like from the participants' point of view to be there, and what particular events or activities were interesting and worth exploring further, I found that my initial analysis was too descriptive. Hoey (2014:6), argues that detailed descriptions are essential qualities of ethnographic accounts, which need to be balanced by analysis and interpretation. An interesting and readable ethnographic research

report provides sufficient description/analysis to allow the reader to understand the analysis, and the interpretation and explanation presented (Fetterman, 2010).

Throughout the data, there were words and concepts which participants used for various things, and through this I was able to identify patterns or themes. As this process progressed, categories formed and developed, which were strengthened through further creative exploration and free writing (Charmaz, 2006). Once themes were identified, and the relevant literature studied and interwoven with the findings, I was able to construct a storyline that stands with merit, helping the reader to comprehend the process, understanding, and motivation of the interviewer (Aronson, 1992).

Lassiter's code of conduct concluded that:

> the primary concern must be to the community consultants with whom we work; this includes: - maintaining academic integrity by creating truthful representations of what's been said, establishing good rapport with respondents so that future collaborative studies can be undertaken, and establishing that this project is not just about a book or project (Lassiter, 2005:33).

Participants should be made aware of the studies' product materials and be actively involved; they must have the right to have copies of their own interviews *(ibid.)*. As researchers, we have a responsibility to the community and our respective disciplines to fulfil our commitment and to finish what we started.

The amount of information generated and the storytelling aspect of this, created a great deal of data, some of which was more relevant than others. Making a visual representation of a mind map, enabled me to prioritize the themes which I felt were most relevant to their subjective feelings of identity.

Figure 4.1: mind map of belonging

Through this method, I discovered that there were two aspects to the participants' sense of identity; firstly, there is a positive sense of self and Gypsy identity, then secondly, there are strong feelings of discrimination and prejudice, providing a negative view of how respondents feel. Having identified the sub themes running through all the data, I read and re-read the transcripts in order to reduce these to those which more directly relate to the question of how this settled Gypsy community express their identity.

In my initial analysis I coded inter-related themes. Although I felt those selected were directly connected with the research question, I found they overlapped at times, which I found both confusing and overwhelming. I then read and re-read the transcripts in order to reduce these to those sub themes, which I felt more directly related to the research question. Through this method, I selected my initial themes and found that although there is a positive sense of belonging and community, there are also strong feelings of un-belonging - discrimination and prejudice. Some common themes emerged; for example, there were references throughout to feelings of loss of freedom, keeping up with cultural practices and lifestyle choices. The importance of travelling was a recurrent theme as was their sense of social exclusion and the effects of this. Breaking this down further, I found the two strongest interrelated themes are those related to a sense of belonging. For some of the themes selected, the converse was also apparent (for example Belonging v Un-belonging) which is discussed in the data analysis. Themes were categorized as follows: -

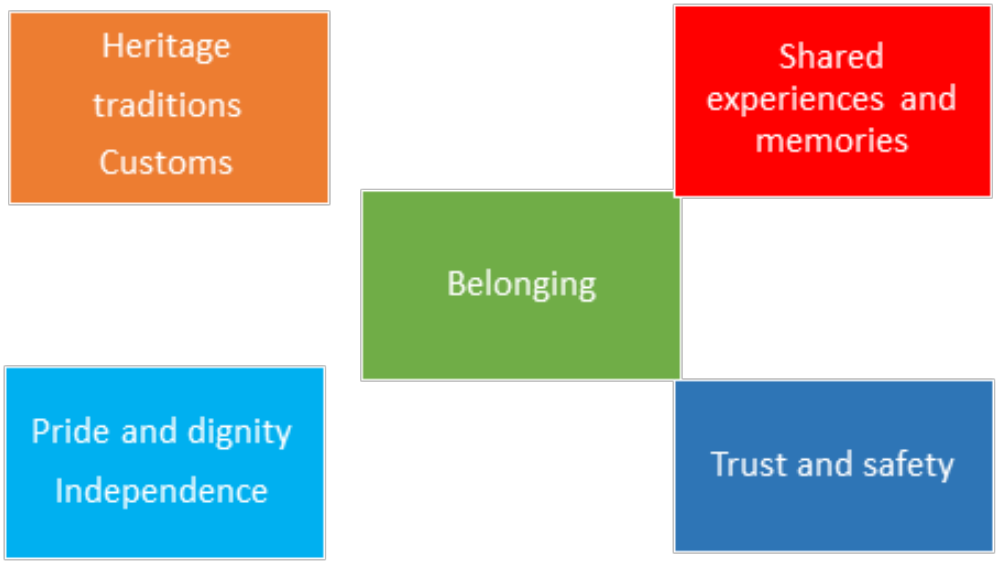


Figure 4.2: Overall themes from the discussions and interviews

Analysis of the art and art workshops

The focus of the project was not on the finished artwork, but in using creativity as method of encouraging participation. Asking participants to create visual data in their own community setting, was a strategy to reduce my influence as the researcher, so that data could be produced without my presence being intrusive (Mannay, 2014). I was aware of how art-based projects could be used as a mode of interview technique in order to enhance participants' reflexivity, 'and to gather a holistic picture of the topics under investigation, that could take into account their different needs' (Bagnoli, 2009:565). Participants were able to choose for themselves what they wanted to create, what medium to use and what resources they wanted me to provide and what themes they wanted to follow. As already clarified, this was never intended to be a therapeutic exercise as I am not art therapist, but more a facilitator of therapeutic art activities in terms of using the creations and images to carry connotations and invite individual reminiscence. They may convey a sense of duration or of nostalgia through codes of colour, framing and through their public context.

Visual methodologies are a collection of methods used to understand and interpret images. Although relatively new, these methods have been used successfully in anthropology and sociology (Glaw, Kable, Hazelton, and Inder, 2017:1). Using visual methods in qualitative research adds value to already existing methods by bringing another dimension by capturing rich multidimensional data (Mah, 2015), and by 'adding valuable insights into the everyday worlds of participants' (Rose, 2001: 66).

Visual images do not exist in a vacuum and looking at them for 'what they are, neglects the ways in which they are produced and interpreted through particular social practices' (Rose, 2001:37). 'Looking carefully at images, entails, among other things, thinking about how they offer very particular visions of social categories such as class, gender, race, sexuality and so on' (Rose, 2001:11).

How images are seen and read, is 'shaped by the values, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that the viewer bring with them' (Liebenberg, 2009:445). My interpretation of the work generated is subjective, and in view of the fact that I witnessed the creation of the work, as well as listening to the discussions and interviews, 'it is important to be aware that viewers of the work will have their own more objective ideas. In order to enable the reader to make their own assessments' (Morley, 1980, and Rose, 2001:197), I have used large amounts of transcript in order to support my analysis and interpretations. 'This subjective nature of the meaning of images underscores the importance of researcher–participant interaction in the research process' (Harper, 2002, cited by Liebenberg, 2009:446).

Many studies which have explored how different audiences interpret the same visual images in very different ways, and these differences have been attributed to the different social identities of the viewers concerned (Rose, 2011:26). Compositional interpretation offers ways of describing the content, colour, spatial organization, light and expressive content of a still image.

To begin with, content analysis must address all the images relevant to the research question. There are a number of sampling strategies described in Krippendorf (2019) and Weber (1993) including:

- *Random*. Number each image from 1 onwards and use a random number table to pick out a significant number of images to analyse.
- *Stratified*. Sample from subgroups that already exist in the data set, choosing your image from within each subgroup and again using a clear sampling strategy.
- *Cluster*. Choose groups at random and sample from them only.

Table 4.4: Cited by Rose, 2001:65

Having selected a sample of images to work with, the next stage was to devise a set of categories for coding or attaching a set of description the images. Although content analysis focuses on the image itself it is important to take into account the fact that there are the two other sites at which an image's meanings are made: the site of its production, and the site of its audience (Rose, 2001:67). 'The first step in this interpretive process is to forget all

preconceptions you might have about the materials you are working with; read them and look at them with fresh eyes' (Rose, 2001:150). Thematic analysis was used to analyze the findings which involved identifying those themes that emerged from the data (Harding, 2013). Becoming familiar with the sources enabled me to identify key themes, took the form of recurring words and visual images.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the methods chosen for this research and have highlighted why discussion, generated through creative workshops and semi structured interviews were the most appropriate methods to use when working across cultural boundaries. This is congruent with the oral story telling culture of the Gypsy community. In order to examine how the settled Gypsy community living in the village, express and sustain their identity, I conducted research in one Gypsy community. I utilised methods such as interviews, workshops groups and community arts. I sought to identify and untangle the effects of being 'settled' into local authority housing and how this impacted on their sense of identity. The workshops were well attended and what was striking, was the level of creativity, flow and concentration which was evident throughout the work. People sat for hours focusing entirely on their creations. The focus on using art was to not only encourage participation, but to provide the group with the opportunity to participate in something they enjoyed. I was led very much by the group and despite my initial intention to work with participants on the final analysis, I accepted their wishes to 'let you get on with that Jane'(Nancy).

In conclusion, I utilised methods such as interviews, organising creative workshops, facilitating community arts groups in the creation of artefacts. I talked to people, I sought to identify and untangle the effects of being 'settled' into local authority housing and how this impacted on their sense of identity.

The focus and analysis of the project was not on the finished artwork, but rather that by using creativity as method of encouraging participation. However, the quality of the work produced was high, and the community wanted to engage in an exhibition of their artefacts to celebrate Gypsy Roma Traveller Month in June 2017. The participants were generous in creating the artork which was to be used as part of the display, resulting in the fact that their work was not given back to them until the end of the exhibition – several months after the material had been created.

This chapter has presented the methods chosen for the research. I have highlighted why discussions generated through creative workshops, together with the interviews, were the most appropriate method to use when working across cultural boundaries, as well as being congruent with the oral storytelling culture of the Gypsy community.

In the following chapter, I present an analysis of the interview data that focuses on the views shared by a group of settled Gypsies living in a rurally isolated village in South East England. They are presented as themes of the differing facets of identity, in order to articulate how identity is expressed by members of this particular Gypsy community.

Chapter 5: Presentation of findings

Introduction

Interviews and workshop discussions

In this chapter I present the findings from the data generated by both the transcribed recordings of the interviews, and the recorded discussions (transcribed) which took place during the workshop group sessions with the Gypsies (from a small village in South East England). In addition, I demonstrate how using a participatory approach encouraged the enthusiasm and engagement of the Gypsy participants from this community.
The experiences of those who participated are presented from their perspective. This is an interpretive exercise, and the result is a co-construction between the observer and the observed. The results presented here are several stages removed from the raw data. Original quotations from the transcriptions of the interviews and discussion through the workshops are used to illustrate and support the findings.

Despite Okely's point (Adams, Okely et al, 1975) highlighting that although Gypsies were not exclusively rural in the past, all respondents in this study have lived in the same rural area for all their lives, and those of their grandparents before them. Therefore, their real-life memories and stories place them firmly as having only experienced a country-side childhood, with no wish to move away from the area (Austin, 2005). In the past, living in the countryside provided an income and a way of life and was a choice made by their ancestors, enabling them (and their parents and grandparents), to both live and thrive independently (Bennett, 2011).

Where an established housed Gypsy/Traveller community exists second and subsequent generations often request accommodation on the same estates as their own parents and siblings (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). 'This tends to have a cumulative effect as other residents move out when a locality gains a reputation as a Gypsy area' (Clark and Greenfields, 2006:9). Participants and their ancestors were originally placed in housing in the area by the local authority, and although there is some element of choice for younger people to transfer back to the village through local connections, most were originally allocated their home by the local authority housing department. Respondents said they were placed there without choice, some distance away from their families. Three younger participants who had originally been born and raised in the village, had requested to be moved back there. However, in the main there was limited choice in this, and allocation is (and was) made on the basis of each individual's personal circumstances at the time. Many young people over the age of 21 are still living with their parents due to limited available and affordable accommodation.

The workshops provided opportunities for people to interact regularly with one another and this enabled them to have a space where they could share memories and talk about what it is like to be a Gypsy from their perspective. This gave them an opportunity to demonstrate how they sustain and express their Gypsy identity. People appeared comfortable and happy to talk openly when being interviewed, and to sit together during the workshops and chat freely whilst being creative; this evidences that they were relaxed in the environment in which they were working alongside the strong bond within the group which was apparent. The attendance at all of the groups was high, with both men and women participating on a regular basis. Where an individual has spoken for themselves, (such as in the interviews), I have quoted directly from the participant, presenting their quotation followed by their pseudonym in brackets. Where there is a conversation, I have presented this as in a playscript.

Gypsy identity

The group in my study define themselves as Romany Gypsies and they all express their sense of belonging to their Gypsy community from childhood and that they knew their heritage from birth:

'I have known who I am all my life and am proud to be a Gypsy' (Sid).

At one of the early workshops, the group began discussing what makes someone a Gypsy.

Ruth:	Even though I live in a house, I'm still a Gypsy. My mum and Dad were both Gypsies so I am too.
Charlie:	Yes me too, my parents were both Gypsies … Yes, I am still a cacker. *(a Gypsy slur)*
Nancy:	What do you think makes someone a Gypsy then Charlie – is it travelling? You know with this new law coming in, you will have to travel to be recorded as a Gypsy.
Eileen:	It's family, culture, it's heritage – the way you do things in certain ways. Some things change, because they get modernised but it's still your roots … they can't can't take them away.
Ruth:	Yes they can stick you in a house but you are still a Gypsy even when you don't travel.
Charlie:	I didn't do much of that before anyway … not back and forth I mean. But I still say I'm a Gypsy.
Nancy:	So, when you talk about the old days then what did you mean?
Charlie:	I mean the good old days and the bad old days …bad days where when times were hard like my Grandfer had, no proper home, living rough in all weathers. Good days where when you had freedom and could do your own thing
Ruth:	And the bad days … you mean when your Grandfer was travelling then? Those days are not something you want to do again…like moving about?

Charlie:	Yes, I'm happy to live in a house now as at least I know where I am and I won't keep getting moved on like my parents did … I feel settled and can pay my bills and that
Rose:	Yes but living in a house has taken our choices away from us though … we have no choice where we live
Nancy:	I agree, we had no say in it …but at least we are all near each other and not stuck in a big town somewhere, and we have our Gypsy community
Ruth:	Yes we are all still Gypsies no matter what … it's our roots.
Sammy:	And we have our celebrations and traditions.

Table 5.0: what makes someone a Gypsy

Respondents all said that they knew they were a Gypsy from the childhood. Family and the extended kinship network provide children with a sense of security, permanency, and confidence (Smith, 1997). From their earliest memories and shared experiences, their commitment to their heritage and sense of being a Gypsy, gives most of the participants feelings of ontological security, and self-worth (Giddens, 1991), alongside a sense of pride in their heritage which they still possess and share as a group, regardless of age (Powell, 2016; Elias, 1991). Participants reported that they identified with their group and their emotional significance to it from birth (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). A child's identity is shaped by the norms, values, and behaviours of the culture in which he or she is raised (Smith, 1997). In Romani Gypsy society, socialisation occurs via the extended family network; 'This network provides Romani children with emotional and physical support' (Smith,1997:244).

Through participation in the social and economic life of the community, self-confidence, respect for others, and a strong sense of identity are acquired (Liegeois, 1994). As identified, a sense of belonging to their community was cultivated in early childhood, through the sharing of information, stories and memories (Stryker, 1980). 'By working alongside parents and other family members, children gain expertise in the skills deemed essential by their community' (Levinson, 2008:235). From childhood, most of the group have been brought up to be proud of their heritage, and this sense of Gypsy identity provides them with a sense of self-worth, pride and understanding *(ibid.).* which they still share and defend:

Sid:	I knew who I was from the beginning and I was proud to be a Gypsy and still am.
Lottie :	Growing up if you are from a Gypsy family you are just brought up in that culture and that is it, we are what we are.
Joe:	I'm not ashamed of who I am…I'm proud to call myself a Gypsy.
Lottie:	I'm a Gypsy and if people don't like us, it's their problem.

Table 5.1: Proud to be a Gypsy

In talking about their childhood, Group members talked about the freedom they had as children, how they would roam the compounds and the surrounding areas, entertaining themselves for hours (Mead, 1934). They told stories of how they would swim in the huge bomb holes (left from the second world war), which filled with water, and in the evenings, they would sit around the fire with the adults, who would be playing cards, telling stories, and singing.

Although at that time, the whole family was living in basic tents, even in very cold weather, Joe recalls those times as being very happy. It is interesting to note that despite a little probing, Joe didn't refer to the cold and harshness of his living conditions at the time:

> 'I grew up in a bender and lived with my family which was my mum and dad and 5 siblings, so there was 8 of us in the bender. The bender just used to get extended as more of us moved in. I loved the benders and remember how warm they were and cosy… a sheet would be put at the opening with the fire just inside which kept it really lovely' (Joe)

Any narrative will present us with a reconstructed (and sometimes distorted) picture of the story it tells. The structure of a beginning, middle and end to a story (and the retelling of it), is derived from the telling if it, rather than through the events themselves (Hinchman and Hinchman, 2001:4). Life must have been hard, which the group acknowledge and forms part of their narrative; yet Joe talks about sleeping in the bender during harsh conditions and describes this as being 'cosy'.

The group's memories of these times, and the stories they tell are positive and full of rich descriptions (Elias,1991). They talked about their relationship with nature, and about the wildlife that was part of their daily life; 'Even though my parents were strict, as kids we had the run of the forest' (Patricia).

> Joe: We saw deer, foxes and other animals every day and we entertained ourselves for hours playing outside in all weathers. There was a stream nearby and there was also a field which had a bomb hole, and it filled up with water and we used to go swimming in it… although I never had any shoes, and my feet were as hard as nails … I loved it.
>
> Eileen: We used to make huge dens and big hills made out of leaves, we entertained ourselves for hours playing.

Table 5.2: being with nature

Although the group acknowledged that life was challenging, they felt that they were able to manage an independent lifestyle, which was a key factor (Austin, 2005); it was accepted that life was hard, but not just because of their ethnicity (Helms, 1993):

> Joe: ' Life was really hard, not just because we were Gypsies, because we were mostly accepted by the locals then …but also because during and after the war there was rationing …but, we were always okay as we still did our coursing every day and so we could catch our own food.'

Joe discusses the fact that when he was little the locals accepted them as Gypsies, and that this made a difference to how they were able to live their life. Attitudes at the time when he was growing up were more positive as Gypsies were seen as a useful source of labour in those days, and most of them were able to work (Smith, L., 2004).

However, it also appears that other members of the group remain `nomadic' even when not travelling. Liégeois (1994:44), argues that an important concept to understand when considering Gypsy principles of freedom is that `nomadism is more a state of mind than a state of fact'. 'Even when they `settle' some Gypsies retain a nomadic frame of mind, and some of the group report that they feel a sense of restlessness and feel cooped up' (Le Bas, 2018). This group have been forcibly `settled' and most of them would clearly continue to pursue economic nomadism if they were not prevented from doing so by outside forces, such as legislation, arising in poverty and rural isolation. To them, 'the essence of travel as a folk memory is as much a psychological need as an economic one' (Liégeois, 1994:46).

> 'They shouldn't just put us in a hole, I need my freedom. I'm not ashamed of my way of life – but not being able to get out and about gets me down. And it won't change'
> Len.

The most common response to the concept of freedom, however, is: `freedom means the freedom to stop without being harassed' (Liégeois, 1994: 47). 'Many of those who have settled into bricks and mortar are still keen to stress the ancestral pattern of nomadism and say that one day they may return to the road' (Liégeois, 1994:46). This is true of many of the group – Eileen for example talked of how she wanted to return to travelling. The group feel however that they could re- adapt to their old lifestyles – see Chapter 6. It is interesting to read Len's comments - he was facing eviction form the home he had lived in for over 47 years and yet he refers to this as having been 'put in a hole'. Clearly, he did not see this as his choice of home despite the length of time he had lived there and raised his family in.

Nomenclature

The implementation of the CJPOA 1994, meant that Gypsies began to bemoan the destruction of their traditional way of life (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). For some Gypsies and Travellers this was a cause of resentment as they felt that they were being punished for the transgressions of a group that was trying to usurp not only their lifestyle but also their identity (Hawes and Perez, 1996). Indeed, long-term damage was done to Gypsy and non-Gypsy relationships by the impact of their encounters with New Travellers. This led to many GRT groups reverting to the name Gypsy as a preference to Traveller – as is true of most of the community in the study group.

This perceived threat of pollution also goes some way to accounting for the re-emergence of the word Gypsy as the preferred term of self-identification among the population where in the past this had derogatory connotations. Claiming the word back is a means through which Gypsies can disidentify from other travelling groups while at the same time invoking the racial stereotype of the 'real' Gypsy (Powell, 2008:95).

There was some contention in the group about nomenclature. Questions were raised by one younger member of the group, as to why some people still refer to themselves as 'Travellers' when most of them neither could or did not actually travel. This may reflect his lack of understanding of the cultural history and values associated with being Gypsy (Heaslip, 2015). Convery et al (2012) agree that Gypsies do not need to travel in order to be identified as Gypsies and being a Gypsy is about shared cultural values, whilst Shubin and Swanson (2010) refer to travelling as the 'spirit of travel'.

An example of how not all the group share the same ideas is that on one occasion, the group had been talking about arranging an outing; Ruth said that she would like to go on a trip to somewhere of interest where there will be some history of 'Travellers' and not a Christmas shopping trip as someone else had suggested. This promoted heated discussion between some group members:

Mikey:	Why would anyone want to go and see dead Travellers. You call yourself a Traveller but you don't travel. Why do you do this?
Nancy:	But looking at the past …that's ok isn't it? Surely, we don't want the past to be forgotten do we, you know, when we did go travelling

Mikey:	No, but the past has nothing to do with them up here ...or any of us does it?. It is not their past to live through. It has nothing to do with how they live now. They have to live their
Bridie:	life now. I agree, it's all in the past and it's not what happens now
Nancy:	Well I call myself a Gypsy not a Traveller because I don't travel now. I think most of us do that. But we are still Gypsies and some of us are interested in our past

Table 5.3: why call yourself a Traveller

Here, Mikey (a much younger member of the community) was both disassociating himself from the group, and he did not share the same cultural values - which is evidenced by his dismissal of their ideals and their sense of belongingness to the past, and how some of the group define themselves. Mikey's point about the past, although was offensive to some was thought provoking and insightful, and also true in some ways. Clearly some of the younger people like Mikey and Bridie wrestle with finding an identity which isn't reliant on the past, which they feel is irrelevant to them. I wondered how he brings up his own children and if he spoke to them about their heritage:

Mikey and Bridie replied:

Mikey:	We have told them they are Romany Gypsy
Nancy:	So, your heritage is obviously important to you, as you have told them who they are?
Mikey:	Of course, we have …it's what we are isn't it? Yes, it is important. I'm not ashamed of who I am.
Bridie:	But I don't think everyone hates us. If you treat people well, th well … that's what I believe anyway
Mikey:	But the past is the past and it's not what we are now …not for me anyway that's for sure

Table 5.4: Discussion on heritage

Mikey clearly felt dis-connected to this past and yet he also identifies himself as a Gypsy, sustaining his identity by ensuring his children know about their culture, and telling them stories about the past (Harro, 2008). This is a contradiction in some ways, and supports the idea that Mikey is struggling with being stuck where he is now, with no clear sense of an identity; he continues to live in a rural area, in proximity to the small Gypsy community with whom he grew up, with little opportunity to change his current circumstances should he wish to do so. He does not manage his identity by looking at the past, as this is something that he can only relate to through the stories of others; for him, these stories do not define his identity. I would suggest that he is unsure of his identity and what it means to him is confused by his disconnection; he appears frustrated by his circumstances and his inability to change

them. Gypsy identity is established through the line of birth (Okely, 1983), and yet despite the fact that both Mikey's parents are of Romany Gypsy origin, he appears to be confused.

I asked the group if Mikey and Bridie's views were similar to those of their own children. Other younger members of the group (including Nancy's son who was not part of the study), clearly feel defined by their sense of identity of which they are proud. Although there was not much opportunity to talk to younger members of the community, those that did attend expressed their views openly, declaring their commitment to being a Gypsy.

> 'My son sees himself as a Gypsy. Well, he always goes around with other Gypsy lads; all of his friends are Gypsies. He wears his cap all the time, his coursing boots … and he always carries his catapult with him … he loves his gold rings and he follows the traditions he has learnt from us. Like, he goes coursing with his mates and with his dad…things like that' (Nancy).

Smith and Greenfields identified that in their study a significantly high number of young people interviewed who were born into housing chose to identify themselves using the generic term 'Traveller' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:185). For them, the use of the term Traveller has the dual function of grounding the speaker's status as a member of 'non-sedentary 'people whilst demarcating the speaker from the 'other' amongst whom they reside *(ibid.).* However, Mikey does not use this name – and in fact does not agree with the term, preferring to call himself a 'Gypsy'.

Alfie, the youngest respondent in the group concurred with Mikey view, saying in his interview:

> 'I don't know why some people call themselves Travellers when they don't travel. We are Gypsies that's what we are' (Alfie).

Many of the younger participants who had grown up in housing were confident in their ethnic identity drawing upon the trope of nomadism whilst still acknowledging the hybridity of their own situation (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:186). Younger women (such as Jessie, see table 5:23, below for example), were active in celebrating their traditions by visiting the site of the compounds with their children for 'camp outs' and by continuing the tradition of storytelling around the fire, and cooking traditional food.

It is evident that it was, and still is, the women in this group who uphold the community's beliefs of maintaining Gypsy 'ways' (Acton, 1997; Casey, 2014). Mikey's mother had left the family when he was little. This may also provide an alternative explanation about Mikey's

views; having been brought up by his father, with his mother being absent and having no contact with his grandparents may provide an explanation for his values being different from those of others in the group. He commented that there was no close female role model in his life whilst he was growing up, and this must have given him a different experience and a different view. Neither of his parents had ever worked and were dependent on state benefits, and they had not been able to follow many of the traditions once they were housed. Although others in the community supported the family, Mikey was in a minority within an already marginalized group. This without doubt would have affected his feelings of security.

Oral history

Story-telling is an example of a verbal communication skill which is still practised by many Romani communities today; story-telling is used to educate and entertain, and to reinforce moral and religious values; some stories deal with the adventures of those Gypsies who travelled, whilst others are Ghost stories or tales of the supernatural. These remain popular, as are personal stories which glorify or exaggerate recent adventures, or situations where a Gypsy outwitted a non-Gypsy (Yoors,1967: 113).

> 'We were brought up on tales, and ghost stories were often how we were disciplined. If we were naughty mum would say the devil would get us. And we believed her, because we had lots of stories about the devil and ghosts told to us!'(Nancy).

Knowledge in traditional Gypsy society is passed on orally. The respondents talked about how in the past they would all sit around the fire in the evenings, and they would listen to the stories told by the older members of the community. Stories would include tales of days gone by and ancestral folklore. It is usually associated with the wisdom of the elderly, who remember traditional customs and stories and who have gained insight and intelligence through life experiences (Smith, 2004: 248).

> 'I didn't want to be a Gypsy when I was little. I didn't really understand it. But since I have become older, I have done a lot of reading and that and realised ...like at school you are taught about the Jews and what they went through in the holocaust, but you weren't told that Gypsies died too. That's something I've learnt as an adult by myself. I've done a lot of reading about Gypsy history, and now I'm proud to be a Gypsy' (Nancy).

Having researched Gypsy culture, Nancy commented that she had traced her Gypsy heritage back over several generations and had used the information she found to share with her own children and others:

> ‘I’m proud to tell them about their heritage. My children know who they are.’ (Nancy).

Although one participant (Charlie), says he is happy to live in a house and would not want to revisit the days of nomadism, the majority of the participants in this study expressed their wish to travel, to live a lifestyle generation had led before them. This raises a question. Is identity then for these settled Gypsies based entirely on the romanticism of the past? Referring to Bruner (2005) most of the group say they are unable to move forward in the modern world and find their identity in a past, a past that they see as ‘Glorious’ (Bruner, 1986); yet for some of the group this is a past based on the insecurity of nomadism, and the challenges that this brings; due to this, some people such as Charlie seem happy to leave this aspect of ‘Gypsiness’ behind. For Charlie, being settled in a house means security and he sees no alternative to this lifestyle due to his financial circumstances. During the project, although he produced many iconic images, at no time did he express a wish to return to travelling. Yet he is clear about his Gypsy identity.

For most of this group, their memories are centred around their life and stories of the compounds, which provide them with a sense of place and the opportunity to live amongst their extended family as they chose; their stories include a desire to return there (Spencer, 2011). So, it seems that belonging to this group is centred around memory and tradition (Elias, 1991; Bhabha, 1994).

As I noticed with Eileen, I observed that when the group talked of their early memories, their voices became animated, and their nonverbal communication demonstrated their joy at recalling these events when sharing their recollections and stories about their early lives, which they told with enthusiasm. (Bhabha, 1994). Despite the sometimes-harsh conditions, older members of the group said they loved being brought up living on the compounds and provided vivid descriptions of their childhood (Elias, 1991). Being able to trust people and expressing their feelings of safety were classed as important. There was a sense of community, of people caring for one another and sharing responsibility:

> Eileen: Everybody looked out for everybody else and we worked together as a community. If a kid stepped out of line another person in the compound would soon tell them, you never had to worry about your
> Sid: kids.
> Life was better then because we could trust each other. You know you could put a tenner in a bender or wherever and you could come back in a week’s time and it would still be there and yet it would be open to everyone.
> Joe: All the families were there – and they would look after one another – there was a real sense of community. They would look after one

	another and their children would be able to play safely. People would look after them. It was like having one big family.

Table 5.5: we would look after one another

The group continue to experience a strong sense of belonging to their immediate community and in being able to work effectively together (Baumeister and Leary,1995). Clearly there is a strong sense of Gypsy identity expressed by the group, reinforced by this sense of belonging:

Nancy	I believe that I live in a close community and that being housed together a reason why we still have our Gypsy identity
Rose	Yes, me too. And I feel that me and my kids could go to any of my Gypsy neighbours if we needed help

Table 5.6: living in a close community

Belonging to the group is centred upon memory, tradition, stories and a shared sense of identity and cultural values, closely linked to stories of the past; all of which have helped to create their narrative. Their memories are focused around the geographical area in which most of them now live; for example, their stories centre on 'the compounds' and their narratives include a desire to return there. Being together as a group features highly in their reminiscence and provides them with a sense of belongingness, and therefore a sense of security and stability (Giddens, 1991).

> 'There is a tendency for travellers to settle in localities close to former stopping places and their historical association with certain areas means that clear demarcations were drawn between 'local' gaudjes with whom many have had a long and close relationship marked by the conflict and cooperation and outsiders' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:151).

Respondents talked about their shared memories of the 'olden days' with vivid recollections of 'the black pot', with a 'Joey Grey' (stew), cooking on the fire, and everyone sitting around the fire, telling stories, and singing. It is evident that their individual identity is not just based upon each individual's ideas of self and interpretation of this, their membership to their immediate group also plays a major role (Tajfel, 1978).

Socialization and belonging

Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggest that the need to 'belong' is characterized by a need for regular contact; Giddens argues that interpersonal relationships have stability, affective concern, and are ongoing (Giddens, 1991). If their belongingness needs are unmet, this may lead to feelings of social isolation, alienation, and loneliness. A sense of belonging, therefore,

can be seen as a precursor to social connectedness *(ibid.).* The participants mainly socialize within their own group, and not with those outside of this, thus increasing their self-segregation not only from wider society (McCaffery, 2014) but other Gypsy groups. All the participants refer to those non-Gypsies outside of their community as 'Gaudjes' (Harro, 2008). So, in this way the study group associate themselves with their immediate Gypsy community rather than other groups including other Gypsy groups (Bhabha, 1994).

The cultural importance for both sited and housed Gypsies and Travellers of attendance at socio-cultural events cannot be over-emphasised, particularly where there is otherwise limited contact with other community members (Greenfields and Ryder, 2010). For Gypsies of all ages, attending fairs, where they can reconnect with other and celebrate their traditional practices or live 'like we used to', remains inextricably linked to notions and retention of 'cultural authenticity' (Kabachnik, 2009)

Attending the fairs (usually held annually) enables participants to engage in activities such as trading in horses, dogs, and other goods associated with Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles *(ibid.).* There is also the opportunity for attendees to buy and sell items which are seen as an integral part of Gypsy culture, such as china and crystal plus household goods. Often such items will be displayed in Gypsy and Traveller homes as both cultural markers and a link with the way of life of earlier generations of women (Greenfields and Ryder, 2010:105). These events are important in terms of reinforcing community bonding. However, for this community, attendance at horse fairs is heavily restricted by their circumstances. As part of my earlier research in 2014, we arranged a community trip to Stow fair. The group reported during the current research project that this had not been a successful day:

Patricia:	I prefer to keep myself to myself and not get involved with People outside of my own community.
Nancy:	Yes, it just seems to lead to trouble when you do.
Sammy:	It's unfair…like hwen we went to Stow fair, the Gypsies there said we stick out like a store thumb. All we were doing was minding our own business
Rose:	Yes, they said we were dirty.
Nancy:	Sticking with our own means you know who you can trust and .if there's a problem you can sort it out.
Rose:	When we meet-up with Gypsies from the sites, and they said we weren't real Gypsies – they called us dirty and said our kids were out of control.

Table 5.7: segregation

This is confirmed by Mary's comments in her interview:

> ‘Those people who live in housing …I’ve met them a few times, and they are not ‘real’ Gypsies. They don’t have the same beliefs as we do and their kids are not brought up to show any respect’ (Mary).

When respondents discuss their sense of belonging, it is clearly in terms of their association with others in their immediate community, and not the wider Gypsy community (Tajfel and Turner, 1978).
The negative experience the group had means they are reluctant to attend such events again, further isolating themselves from wider Gypsy groups and exacerbating their marginalization.

Belonging to their own group provides members with feelings of being able to trust, of being wanted and accepted, which gives them greater levels of confidence than they may otherwise experience. However, there is also limited opportunity to go anywhere outside their immediate community which increases their isolation. Fears of rejection from other Gypsy groups (as highlighted above), also exacerbates their self-segregation. The group often commented on how people referred to them as being dirty.

Often when the participants were referring to the group, they would refer to their group as ‘our community’ reinforcing their sense of trust and belonging to their own group (Heaslip,2015). They support one another on a day to day basis and in times of adversity, even when this is at conflict with their moral codes (Stets and Burke, 2014) as seen in the example of Patricia below.

Cohen argues that communities are best approached as ‘communities of meaning’ and that they provide a sense of belonging and attachment to the members (Cohen, 1982). In this way, ‘community’ plays a ‘crucial symbolic role in generating people’s sense of belonging’ (Crow and Allan 1994: 6). Having a sense of belonging and experiencing relationships of trust that are involved, brings significant benefits (Putman, 2000). Belonging to the community suggests the members have something in common with each other – their Gypsy identity - and the thing held in common distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other possible groups – this is the case with the way that the Gypsy community value family and kinfolk (Cohen, 1982). One of the group (Patricia, Mikey’s mother), had recently returned to live in the village having left her husband for another man several years ago, when her four children were still very young. The community stepped in to help their father raise his young family.
Returning to the earlier discussion, this provides evidence to support Gidden’s (1991) theories of ontological security. Mikey said he was a small child when his mother left and she was ostracized by her family as a result, not seeing her children for several years until she returned

to her birthplace a few months after the workshops began. Generally, when someone from the Gypsy community has been behaved outside the cultural values of the group, they are 'shamed' by other Gypsies. As a result, they tend to avoid social situations, in order to avoid or minimize disruptions (Greenfields, 2006). If a Gypsy woman has cheated, the shame of her behaviour will reflect on both her and the group to which she belongs (Greenfields, 2006). This may provide an explanation about Mikey's struggle with his own identity, his dismissal of some Gypsy traditions and his conflicting values and may suggest that he does not have salience in his identity (Stryker and Serpe, 1982). Casey's study found that women who broke moral codes were described as being 'indecent;' indecent women were effectively cut off from their communities by a combination of being ostracised and socially excluded (Casey, 2014: 14).The term 'cast out' was widely used to describe what would happen to any Gypsy woman who broke the rules in this way *(ibid.).*

The group demonstrate through their actions their supportive membership. Although there was initially a negative reaction to Patricia's return, members rallied round when Patricia became seriously ill and they supported her both through her enforced house move, homelessness and her subsequent illness, by making meals, providing her with clothes and household goods. Their sense of identity gives the participants a sense of belonging and connectedness to their own immediate Gypsy community (Phinney, 1990) whom most regard in one sense as 'family'. The fact that Patricia felt able to attend the workshops and to access the support provided by the group again evidences the strength in their sense of belonging, their resilience and acceptance of one another and the importance of the group to them which outweighs their sense of shame.

Being together with family and friends (who are living in the same locality) gives the participants a sense of security, safety and shared belonging (Tajfel and Turner, 1978):

> 'Our community is like a family. Family is family. We believe in supporting one another even when there has been a falling out. We may not like what has happened but our differences are forgotten when we need to' (Nancy).

It is apparent that they see themselves as a united group, one which is separate from mainstream society, and some other Gypsy groups and they see themselves as belonging to a particular cultural community (Ceyhan, 2005; Austin, 2005).

> 'It's family, it's our culture … the way we do things in certain ways. Some things change, because they get modernized … but it's still our roots' (Eileen).

Eileen realized how important the traditions are when her own mother died, and she ensured that she shared these with her own children (Bhabha, 1994). Belonging to their own community is expressed in the sharing of similar memories of the past and of their close personal bonds, and trust in others in their immediate community network rather than the wider community. As a result of the discrimination they face, respondents unanimously talked about how people in the group looked after everybody else and worked together as a supportive community.

'The exclusion and vilification shown towards the Gypsy community have been compounded by poor access to services, a lack of political power and exclusion from decision-making processes' (Richardson and Ryder, 2010:4). While strong social ties, particularly when reinforced by prejudice from the dominant society, provide a structured source of support and a source of cultural identity they also encourage social closure (Powell, 2016). As Cantle (2008: 201) observes, the concept of 'bridging' networks to the wider community resonates with the community cohesion notion of 'cross cultural contact' and the existence of 'bonding' ties in close knit networks can restrict such contact. Granovetter (2005: 1371) observes that: 'The fewer indirect contacts one has the more encapsulated he will be in terms of knowledge of the world beyond his own friendship circle'. Over-reliance on close ties may increase social divisions by thwarting the development of 'bridging' ties with the wider community, restricting potential linkages to the labour market and channels of new information and opportunities (Staber, 2001). For this group, their own community is where their whole life unfolds. Most of them rarely leave Village A. All respondents said that over the last ten years, they have not been away from home or have not even been able to visit family outside of the immediate area.

Family Values

The respondents expressed a strong sense of cultural pride in caring for all members of the immediate and extended family. Greenfields and Ryder (2010:102) highlight that' together with respect for the authority of elderly community members lies a contract of responsibility for their well-being, with children, grandchildren and other relatives ensuring that care is provided to older relatives'. The group confirmed this, saying they were proud of the fact that family members continue to support one another, as they have done through the generations. This reflects the long-standing Gypsy tradition of people looking after all their family members (Lane., Spencer., and McCready, 2012). Participants expressed their

disapproval that some people from outside put their relatives in a home … 'and then never even go and see them' (Isobelle), (Casey, 2014).

The majority of respondents in the study felt that 'outsiders' did not understand them, and in terms of health services for example, that this would ultimately lead to people who are unwell being admitted into hospital or full-time care by health workers, which is not a desirable option for them:

Nancy:	We believe that the best place for anyone in the family who is ill, is to be with the family. We don't believe in putting our loved ones into care.
Ruth:	We look after our own …it's just the way it is and the way we are.
Patricia:	They tried to get Len into full time care, but he refused to go. He wanted to die at home with his family where he felt happy.

Table 5.8: caring for family

Family Heritage

Another sense of belonging for the group is that they use Romany language when they are together (Hall and Hall, 1990). This is an important aspect of their Gypsy culture, and their children have been brought up to learn how to speak this (O'Nions, 1995):

> 'Our language is different; we talk differently when we are altogether and use different words. We have learnt two different worlds, one when we are out and one when we are at home'(Daisy).

When they talked about language, there was a general view that some of their language had been taken from them:

Alfie:	Even our language isn't ours any more… Gorgers use our words. It's like Kushti … you hear people saying that every day, people who aren't Gypsies. Like that Danny Dyer in EastEnders as well.
Patricia:	When I was at the hospital the other day, there were two men talking and they were using Romany words… just talking like. I asked them if they were Gypsies, but they said no, no they weren't.
Joe:	Yes, it started on TV with only fools and horses didn't it…old Del boy used lots of Gypsy words...like Kushti (good) Gavver (Policeman) and Chav (child).
Rose:	And do you remember when the word Chav was used in a bad way?

Eileen:	Yes, it was used to describe young people … rough ones like that character in Little Britain [Vicky Pollard] who was always in trouble. You would hear that word all the time…but in a bad way. *(See Chapter 4, Owen, 2011).*
Nancy:	And what about Wonga and that TV advert for Wonga loans…? Wonga comes from Vonga, the Romany word for money.

Table 5.9: discussion about language

Through integration and socialization, Romany language has infiltrated into the English vocabulary over the centuries (O'Nions, 1995). Use of Romani-based slang has also been documented in various social groups as a group lexicon arises from increasing interactions between different marginalized groups (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 55). The study group feel a sense of grievance that they have lost some of the cultural markers that were significant to Gypsy heritage such as language and also their dress, which they also feel was stolen from them (Smith, L., 2004). One of the younger people in the group said how he feels that some aspects of his identity have been lost:

Alfie:	I was brought up as Gypsy. But it's all changed now. We can't even have things for our self anymore …I mean it's like our caps, any bloke and even girls wear them now, they're fashionable. It's the same with the coursing boots, you can buy them anywhere nowadays, in lots of colours and they have become trendy. It used to be that you could only get these things from special shops. And they were worn mostly by Gypsies. I would wear my cap and my boots and coursing jacket when I was going out somewhere and my catapult would be in my top pocket.
Rose:	Well you can't do that anymore …you'd be in trouble if you had your catapult on show

Alfie was expressing his view parts of his identity have been 'taken' from them all and have now become part of mainstream attire.

In one of the workshops, the group engaged in an animated discussion about family and the origin of family names:

Eva:	They say we came from India, but none of us have got Asian names, though have we?
Rose	No, but this was centuries ago, remember.
Patricia	And some of them took the names of the local people who gave them work.
Nancy	If you think about it, it would seem that if we came from India then we aren't going to have common names like Cooper and that, are we. So that's because we took the names of the places we stayed … like the barrel makers names for

	instance. So that's where the name Cooper came from …the barrel makers.
Rose	And the name Doe … that came from the forest.
Eileen	It's a bit like in slavery when the slaves took their names from their owners.
Nancy	Yes, they took names of others and they can't trace their ancestry that easily either…I've read loads about it.
Rose	Of course, there are some people who have the same names as us, but they aren't Gypsies – like Cooper for example. That's a common name isn't it …but not every Cooper is a Gypsy are they…some aren't Gypsies.

Table 5.10: family names

Nancy and Rose both said that they had tried (unsuccessfully) to trace their family tree through an ancestry website, but this had proved difficult because, as was the custom in the community at that time, her ancestors had used different names in the past. Rose explained surnames were interchangeable until around 70 years ago, and were often taken from different sides of families:

Sid:	In the old days, many Gypsies jumped the broomstick and this is why you might get brothers and sisters with different surnames; one's taken the mothers name, and the other one took the father's name. You were given the choice; some weren't registered or christened … you know well if you're not registered no one knows about you! Of course, that doesn't happen nowadays.
Rose:	Granny took her own Granny's name … but my other gran had taken mum's dad's name's for instance and some of her family took their mums names. And then some took their dads names.
Eileen:	Yes …so if you look at the family graves, people will have different names sometimes even though they are related
Nancy:	But whatever name they took, it's family that matters, it's all about family
Sammy:	We're very close to family, especially our immediate family. Family is really important - even our extended family really. Maybe it's all we've got left now
Eileen:	Most people in the community here are related to each other in some way or other. We are such a big family that we could meet somebody and not even know that they were a relative.

Table 5.11: family names (2)

Independence: earning a living

All of the group told stories of their early experiences of work with a positive sense of pride (Stets and Burke, 2014; Elias, 1991) they talked about their childhood in terms of

contributing to family life, working alongside family members in trading, foraging and harvesting food or producing items to sell:

Sid:	When I was a kid, the whole family worked together as one. We all had jobs to do from morning until night … but we were happy … me and my brothers
Joe:	Even as little kids, the first job of the day would be to run and get the water … I didn't mind. I think I had a hard but happy childhood
Eileen:	It was just part of our lives …going calling with your mam or staying at home looking after the kids, helping to collect wood and picking vegetables and fruit … every day was different and I liked that. Plus, we were outside all the time
Joe:	You could earn a living even as a child … everyone could earn money from the land. When I was about twelve years old, I remember picking turnips, potatoes and carrots and earning 6d a week. The money would help feed the family
Sid:	We would be working all day, when we would go off ferreting. Me and my brothers would then sell the rabbits to the local butcher. You know when we sat down to eat that rabbit stew, I felt proud that I had been the one to bring

Table 5.12: discussion about working as a child

In the past it was not uncommon for women to carry on being engaged in work (often hard physical work), even right through their pregnancy:

Sid:	We were spud picking down at Boyd's Farm and Mrs K went up to the end of the field came back with a baby in her arms... and then she carried on working
Patricia:	When we were kids, we would go out working with our mum. We would all be there - there would be one in the pram and one in her belly (Patricia).

Table 5.13: women and working

Respondents did not always feel they had control over their lives. A lack of control, particularly when combined with low social status, can have negative impacts on psychological and physical health (Van Cleemput, 2007). Due to their feelings of isolation, people felt that better and affordable transport links, culturally appropriate accommodation and location of this, and greater opportunities to gain financial security (for example through employment) would enable them to be able to live better lives (Powell, 2016), and to gain an increased sense of wellbeing.

Charlie:	It's hard to get out of here, the buses are expensive and don't go very often.
Sammy:	Yes, there's only just three buses a week and they cost a fortune
Rose:	The nearest supermarket is 5 miles away and it costs over 11 quid there and back
Charlie:	And you can't get a bus in the evening

Table 5.14: transport

It has been said of British Gypsies that their self-segregation has developed through their need for belonging (McCaffery, 2014). For this community there is a difference between emotional attachment to the ethnic group, and attachment to the label of Gypsy (Convery et al, 2012; Stets and Burke, 2014).

Most of the group are now reliant on state benefits, although they would prefer to be financially independent; but they feel there is no alternative to their current lifestyle, and no choice to do anything else. Billy mentioned living on benefits 'like everyone else'. Even though he is a young man, he did not at any time suggest that he would be able to live independently; clearly, he felt that this would not be possible. A recurrent theme in a range of literature is that Gypsies' 'traditional' livelihood has gone, and that they will disappear with societal development (Adams et al, 1975). Whilst Okely (in Adams, Okely et al, 1975:2), believes 'this underestimates their continuing ability to adapt to change in the larger economy', the Gypsies in this study are rurally isolated and cannot survive without support from the state (Peacock, 2010). This is due to their housing situation, their financial status which limits their ability to own private transport exacerbated by a lack of accessible employment opportunities.

A cultural preference for self-employment rather than the monotony of wage- labour means that Gypsy/Travellers have long been in 'symbiotic equilibrium' with sedentary society (Acton,1997: 237). Women's role in hawking has lessened over time however, and women appear to have become exclusively involved in domestic labour (Richardson and Ryder, 201). Rural isolation means that employment opportunities are not always easily sourced. Economic and status insecurity is now recognised as a feature of late modernity and for the Gypsy community this has led to a greater reliance on the benefits system (Phillips, 2017).

The group are now dependent and reliant on services where in the past, they looked after themselves. 'It's hard to get out, the buses are expensive and don't go very often' (Rose).

Eileen:	I have had jobs in the past which I enjoyed. I worked at different factories, and it was great because lots of us worked there and they provided transport there and back. When I first left school, I went to a

	factory where I was painting toy soldiers… I did that until I was 17. That was fun.
Len:	Yes, a crowd of us would go every day. They would pick us up and drop us off again.
Eileen:	Then I went to the chicken factory… we were treated there just the same as everyone else. They picked us up every day by minibus and brought us back. When it shut down, there was no other work I could get to.
Charlie:	There used to be better transport and we could work. I don't drive so I can't get anywhere to work. I can't drive and can't afford a car.

Table 5.15: working

Apart from one respondent, all those participating in this study were financially reliant on the state, and there was general concern and anxiety around the imminent changes in welfare benefits and how this would impact on them as individuals. The group see themselves as still wanting to be independent, yet there is a high level of acceptance that the welfare system is the only way they can gain an income, and they appear resigned to this. One of the younger women had gained a law degree a few years beforehand, and she had decided to be a stay at home mother. I observed during the workshops that the community were dependent on Elise for support in making benefit claims, some of which required access to the internet which many of the group did not have. The new benefit system also required people to provide forms of identification which people could not easily provide without support. There is a true sense of regret and loss about the inability to work and to independently financially support themselves and their families. The group are no longer able to trade in the same ways, 'and the role of provider has therefore been lost' (Stets and Burke, 2014):

Rose:	Calling's dying out, now nobody will answer their door to you.
Patricia:	There was a better life in the past - you could work and earn a living and be independent. Nothing is done by hand anymore so there aren't the jobs that there used to be in the old days because there's nothing we can make that would sell.

Table 5.16: Calling is dying out

The group commented that the future looks bleak for the younger members of the community. With the ever-growing restrictions on movement, has come a lack of opportunity to find not only traditional work, but any employment. Smith and Greenfields (2013) believe that this has led to increased welfare costs with the enforced unemployment of younger people whom are unable to find secure work near to where they live. 'The enforced sedentarism of Gypsies and Travellers is not politically unjust but is also in these desperate times, economically counter-productive' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: xvii). As Okely highlights (1983), rather than possessing the multiple skills of their ancestors which were

celebrated decades ago, it appears that the younger people in this community are 'disengaged'. Okely argues that whilst practitioners will suggest that this is due to lack of education, Gypsy children were always educated though not necessarily schooled (Okely, 1997). The traditional roles of fruit picking and other seasonal farm work has now largely been taken up by migrant workers, with little awareness by society that this work was once undertaken mainly by Gypsies (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: xii).

Traditions - **Marriage**

Eileen talked about marriage and how things have changed. All of those in relationships and under the age of 40 were living with a partner rather than being married, however all respondents who were in relationships were with people of Gypsy origin.

Rose:	We do still get married young. In my day, we weren't allowed boyfriends, we were protected. It's not the same now, but it would be if my grandma was still alive. When we were young, people were sheltered. Times are changing … it's much easier on the kids now. Easier for them to mix with other young people.
Nancy:	Our weddings are all about family and are informal. Everyone is invited and the children are all included and are expected to celebrate with us.
Rose:	Many families come together and help… they all get involved. But it's not at all like that My big fat Gypsy wedding in any way at all.
Eileen:	It's all changed a lot nowadays. Lots of the young ones live with their partners now and don't get married … this would never have happened when I was young, my parents would have disowned me… but it accepted now
Nancy:	This would not have happened in my grandparents' day as it was considered a total disgrace to the family name.
Eileen:	As long as the partner is from the same culture its ok.
Rose:	Oh yes… families want their young to marry within Gypsy culture

Table 5.17: discussion about marriage

Older members of the family were a powerful influence, especially the grandparents (Stryker, 1980) who had a great deal of authority. People talked about not bringing 'disgrace' on the family and this generally meant that approval had to be sought from grandparents, especially 'grandma' as Nancy and Rose highlight above and below:

Nancy:	I remember when I wanted to go out with my friends to a club and my mum said I had to take my nan with me. I met my

	husband when I was just sixteen. I had to get my Nan's approval to go off courting. After a while I moved in with her so that she could be my chaperone while I was courting him.
Rose:	If I hadn't got married, I would have brought disgrace on the family name.
Patricia:	Doing what your grandparents wanted was part of our culture. Even though my husband was a Gypsy, my parents didn't accept him at first because they said he came from a different background and culture as he was brought up in another part of the county.
Nancy:	My dad is a Gorger…and he's more like a Gypsy than anyone! My dad's family would not accept that he married a Gypsy so we never had anything to do with our Grandparents. But my dad upholds the Gypsy traditions and customs more than some of the other men; he strongly believes in them and now call them his own.

Table 5.18: being chaperoned

It is apparent that the grandmothers had enforced the rule (Thoits, 1986). It is interesting that none of the younger women had living grandmothers by the time that they had reached the age of 16 years, so clearly there is not the same level of grandparent influence with the younger women in the current time. Life expectancy is shorter now than it was in the past, with high numbers of people dying (in the main) before the age of 65 (Peacock, 2008). In the past, the grandmother had an essential role in supervising the younger females in the family, and it appears that this role is no longer available. However, it is evident that it is still the women who uphold the community's beliefs of maintaining Gypsy 'ways' (Acton, 1997; Casey, 2014).

I asked if the younger children have learnt traditions etc from their grandmothers. I wondered if grandparents still have much of a say in contemporary Gypsy culture.

Eileen:	Yes, the grandparents have a say in what's going on but it's down to the parents to bring the child up too.
Elsie:	And is it the mum or the dad who has more say in bringing up the children?
Eileen:	Well, it's the mum who is with the children all the time, so she makes decisions. But if the dad doesn't agree or thinks something should have a different way then it's his word that goes. Mind you, I've never been very good at doing what I am being told by any man.

Table 5.19: grandparents

Traditions - **Food**

The community talked about some of their favorites recipes such as Joey Grey (stew) and rasher pudding – the latter appears to be a treat which is cooked mainly by the older women in the group (Stets and Burke, 2014).

Eileen:	There are different ways of making rasher pudding. With mine, I get some flour and put it in the bowl. Then I put in the suet and mix it all together with salt and pepper – as if you are making a cake. I add some water and then roll it out to a square shape. If you like, add some onions and rashers and a bit of potato. Push in the ends so it doesn't come out. And you need to make sure the middle doesn't come apart. Then you put in boiling water for about one and a half hours. I use self-raising flour because it's got the best rise in it. It is easy to make though.
Charlie:	But not everyone can make it, so they come to you Eileen
Eileen:	They can't be bothered that's why!
Jane:	Were people able to do this when they lived in the tents?'
Eileen:	Yes they would. You see you don't steam it over the water. No, no, no, you put it in the water. So, you'd put it in the big pot to cook it. You need to wrap a damp cloth over it and tie it tight enough so it doesn't come apart.
Jane:	Why is it a traditional dish do you think?'
Eileen:	it's probably because in those days it was all you could afford. It was hearty cooking …
Nancy:	You could cook it in a pot over the yog (fire). And because it's one pot cooking you can add your veg…roast potatoes and veg … a bit of greens.
Elise:	And can all your children make it then Eileen?
Eileen:	No!! No, they can't. Some people use different ingredients and that's the way they were taught; usually by their granny. I make it about once a month and it's what we would have as a traditional Sunday roast. Some of us do it every Sunday ……to us it's like a Sunday roast.

Table 5.20: Rasher pudding

On one occasion, Lottie asked if I would bring more apples to the session. I was happy to do so and internally thought that this was a good idea as it was a healthy ingredient to the lunch. I had always brought fruit to the session, and I noticed in subsequent weeks that a number of people were taking the apples home with them, some stuffing two or three into their pockets; other pieces of fruit were often left behind. I assumed they were taking the apples for their children. On one occasion I commented on this to Nancy, who (to my amusement) replied:

Nancy:	Don't be daft Jane, they're not for the kids…they get free fruit at school! They're to feed the forest ponies that keep coming into the grounds of the hall.

Whilst Nancy felt that this was being disrespectful to me, this demonstrates their attachment to the horse and explained why the numbers of horses coming into the grounds of the hall were increasing week by week. The horse is given special status among Gypsies. It is considered ritually clean, not *mochadi* (ritually polluted) as are cats, dogs and some other animals (Okely 1983). In those communities where horse trading remains possible, the horse is an important intermediary between Gypsy and gaudje as an item of exchange, and between Gypsies it has special significance *(ibid.).*

The group maintain their traditions (Casey, 2014) as much as they are able to and ensure that their children learn about their heritage in a positive way:

Jessie:	In the summer we and the kids go out into the old compounds and camp out. We stay for a couple of nights and cook food on the fire. We all go and collect wood. I've got a cast iron crate specially to put on the fire. The kids love it … and I always make a stew … some joey grey or something so that they can eat traditional food cooked on an open fire.
Nancy:	Yes, we've done this a few times haven't we? We have to be careful where we camp and we make sure it's not for too long so people don't moan. The children love it. We toast marshmallows and boil up a kettle on the fire for hot chocolate. We sit and talk and sometimes tell stories.
Jessie:	We have a fire outside in our garden most Friday evenings, especially in the winter …and we invite our friends and family to come sit around the fire… we always have marshmallows to toast on the yog (fire) too.
Nancy:	I am lucky where I live as I can do this as we have a large back garden, which is not overlooked.
Charlie:	Yes, you are lucky …we can't do this where we live. My granfer and grannie were evicted from their house for lighting fires and cooking in their garden

Table 5.21: passing on traditions

Traditions – Pollution and Food

The group is strongly aware of their cultural identity and their behaviour around food (Peacock, 2008; 2010;Condon and Salmon, 2014). Gypsies fear contamination of food prepared or served by a Gaudje, as they consider an outsider to be 'mochadi' (unclean) because they do not uphold the same practices (Okely,1983). On one occasion Eva and Nancy asked to talk to me privately about the food preparation for the community lunches, and explained that the group wanted me to consider their cultural preferences in preparing the food:

Nancy:	I've spoken to everyone and we agreed that we don't like eating food which is laid out in a buffet style.

Eva:	There's a lot of people here and we don't like the thought of people touching the food and breathing on it … anything we eat must not be contaminated but pure and not 'mochadi' (unclean).
Nancy:	We trust you to make us our food Jane … we know you are clean.
Eva:	Yes, we would just prefer it if we could each have our own food on a plate.
Nancy:	And as you know we prefer paper plates and cups as we don't trust the ones here to be clean.
Eva:	What we look like on the outside … our appearance is not as important to us as what enters their body… but what we eat and drink has to be clean

Table 5.22 – pollution and food preparation

Changing this arrangement meant that their cultural traditions and beliefs could be maintained and demonstrated my respect towards their cultural preferences (Baase, 2014:5; Cohen,1982; Okely,1983). It was important that the group trusted me to bring food that they approved of and were prepared to eat. This included buying packaged food and drink (Okely, 1983).

In other aspects of their lives, the group maintain their cultural practices as much as they can, although they say living in a house is challenging for them. For example, having a toilet inside their home impacts on their cultural practices, such as the way they would wash clothes in the past, cooking on an open fire, and maintaining personal gendered hygiene practices:

Jessie:	When my mum and dad first got their house, they refused to sleep upstairs because of the toilet… they lived downstairs for a long time.
Eva:	I don't blame them … I wish they had put the toilets outside … it would have been better for us like that, as we don't want to sleep next to it. And the whole house hold use the same toilet

Table 5.23: facilities in a house

Since being forced into housing in an isolated area, the group say that the state has enforced rules and regulations which prevent them from leading an authentic, independent life, following Gypsy traditions, and this has limited their ability to have freedom of choice in almost all aspects of their lives (Giddens, 1991; Burke and Stets, 2009):

Sammy:	*Nowadays there are too many rules which stops us living and working the way we want to …the Traveller way.*
Jessie:	*People on the sites are allowed to live the Gypsy way. They go coursing, they can keep horses, have dogs outside and ride quad and mini motor bikes…. they have fires outside. They follow their trades. All the things we … we can't do …and because there are some bad people we have a bad name. So, we good ones can't carry on the traditions.*
Eileen:	*Yes, that's true.*

Sammy:	*We are just cooped up, not outside in the fresh air enough. There's nowhere we can do what we want or what the kids want.*
Eileen:	*Even if they try and shoot rabbits they get into trouble.*
Jimmy:	*Yes …I can't even carry my catapult these days without*
Eileen:	*getting stopped. I only want to go rabbiting that's all. That's all gone now. There won't be no Travellers [Gypsies] before long, the old ways are dying out.*
Kitty:	*I want our children raised as Gypsies. Me Granny says that things are different but she's different than how her granny was, she lived in tents! What would she think of us living in houses … with the toilet just outside the bedroom? We will survive …there will always be Travellers.*

Table 5.24: losing traditions

Traditions - Death

Death is celebrated in similar ways to other Gypsy groups and participants reported that to them, burial is preferable to cremation. There is always a wake, and the celebratory event itself is similar, with traditional hymns, and a simple service, in the case of this group which is held in the local village church. The men group together and separate themselves from the women. It is the women who plan the event; they prepare the body, organize the flowers, arrange the sitting up with the dead and notify relatives and friends of the arrangements (Casey, 2014).

The cultural practice of 'sitting up', of not leaving the deceased alone from the time of death until the funeral, is common with this group, as with other Gypsy groups, and involves both immediate and external family members and friends. Immediately after death there will continue to be a constant flow of visitors who come to pay their respects to the deceased and their family.

Lottie:	When someone dies it is a really big thing for Gypsies … we believe it is important that they are with us at home until they are buried. Men usually will be outside and women inside, we want to be with our loved ones. Even though death is death. We want to do the right thing for our loved ones.
Nancy:	The men usually stay outside and sit together around the yog (fire). The women sit inside; usually the body is in another room and people go in and out and to spend time with them. Everyone says goodbye. Even if someone has fallen out with the dead person, everything will be forgotten in death

Table 5.25: discussing death practices

The windows of the house are opened as the coffin leaves, so that the spirit of the person is free to leave. When Len died, his friends hosted the wake, and crowds of family and friends came to say their farewells (Cohen, 1982). Nancy explained:

Nancy: Many people will have their photographs and special personal belongings buried with them. Anything else is often destroyed, or given away. This can even include their curtains.

When Mary's husband died:

' I arranged for the funeral to be held in the traditional way. I promised I would do this. I wanted him at home with me here. So, we got a big gazebo and put it next to the house by the gates so that people could get in. And then we put lots of chairs round so that the men could sit and talk and tell stories and the women did the sitting up. We did the flowers ourselves. It was a lovely send off and the church was full … over 400 people came '(Mary).

Table 5.26: Talking about death

As Okely found in her ethnographic study, most participants said they didn't believe in God; (Okely, 1983)

Eva felt being 'good to people' was in some ways like having a religion. However, this group has great respect for their dead and believe in allowing the spirit of that person to pass onto what they described as 'the afterlife' without any disruption. The families said they maintain a strong connection with the deceased. They are grateful for the tiny local church and the cemetery, where they can easily visit their dead, as is their custom. The graves are attended regularly by the family and these are impeccably kept, which is regarded as a mark of respect. The displaying of the floral tributes the women have made is an important aspect of the celebration (Stets and Burke, 2014; Stryker, 1980). These are made by the women with significant meaning, depicting things that the dead person loved (Cohen, 1985):

Nancy: This might be a family cross, or even a scratch card, a pint of beer, or a packet of fags – anything that was important to that person. Flowers are really important, and the women are responsible for creating the displays. We learn how to do this when we are little.

Primrose: I was taught how to make the floral tributes from a very young age. The first person I knew in my family that died was my grandad and I remember helping with the flowers. I was about seven when he died. I remember making him the gates of heaven and an open book to represent the bible. It's the women's job.
Making the wreaths is a tradition we are very proud of.

And:

Sammy: I wasn't taught many traditions, but I know how to make the floral wreaths

Rose:	The flowers are really important to us…we like them to represent something of the person that died … their favourite things and we like the wreaths to be very colourful and bright
Nancy:	People come from all over to say their goodbyes. The flowers are usually brought in a flatbed lorry and everyone gathers to admire them. They are a big part of showing love and respect for the dead.

Table 5.27: floral tributes

The funeral itself is a highly charged event, that reaffirm social ties and communal boundaries (Stets and Burke, 2014). During the research project, six of the group died. In every case, several of the community said they had sat up all night with the body, while the men sat outside, telling stories and talking about their memories of their loved ones until the funeral ceremony took place (Cohen, 1982).

Although Gypsy funeral traditions are often characterized as full of abundance, and lavish style, (Morris, 2000), the funerals I attended were very modest and unassuming contradicting the common view presented in the media. In all of these cases there was a formal walking procession and as soon as the burial was over, people dispersed quietly. Following a recent death in the community, Ruth and Eva were talking about mortality:

Eva:	I don't care if I die.
Ruth:	Me neither, I just want to die now.
Eva:	I've had enough of this life

Table 5.27: attitudes to mortality

The experience of poor health and early death among extended family members have been normalised and accepted by the group. Returning to the earlier conversation, when asked why she felt like she would be happy to die, Ruth responded:

Ruth:	I'm sick of this life … they are taking my house away any day now … so I 'll have nothing … I have had enough.
Eva:	I just want to go to sleep and not wake up … like my grandmother… she just sat in her chair one night and didn't wake up.
Ruth:	Yes …don't you ever at night- time when you go to sleep just think how nice it would be to not wake up …dying would just be like going to sleep then.

Table 5.28: dying

There was not an opportunity (nor was it appropriate) to follow this conversation up at the time. However, it is concerning that some people openly express these views which could indicate a strong sense of depression. In her day-to-day interactions, Ruth appeared to be

coping with her challenging situation, often making jokes and joining in the discussions. Yet she was clearly experiencing feelings of depression and anxiety and feelings that she had nothing to live for. Previous research I have undertaken indicate that there are high levels of depression in the Gypsy community, and these conversations support this evidence (Peacock, 2010).

Research evidences that Gypsies were less likely to seek medical or mental health support or seek professional help following bereavement, turning instead to community social support networks (Peacock, 2010). Despite the fact that in the wider community, life expectancy has increased, there appears to be an acceptance in the Gypsy community that people die early (Van Cleemput and Parry, 2000):

Lottie:	I would say around 60 years of age is a very good age for a Gypsy.
Rose:	All of my own mother's brothers and sisters died young - between the ages of 40 -61. But her grandparents lived to a ripe old age.

Table 5.29: acceptance of premature mortality

Here Lottie and Rose do not question the early mortality, but accept this as normal. Among Gypsies and Travellers, coherent cultural beliefs and attitudes underpin health-related behaviour, and health experiences must be understood in this context (Parry et al, 2004). Ill health is seen as normal in this group, and an inevitable consequence of the group's life experiences, and it is stoically accepted. Len had diabetes and towards the later stages of his illness, he refused any medical intervention from professionals:

Len:	I don't like going to the doctor … I only go when I have to as I'm frightened that they will find something wrong. I'm frightened they'll say it's the big 'C'.
Patricia:	You know the old 'C' is going to get you in the end don't you? When it's in your family blood you know it's coming to you too'.

Table 5.30: going to the doctor

In the course of the research project, Len and Ruth were evicted from their home, where Len had lived for 47 years. Following complaints from neighbours, the couple were moved into a one-bedroom local authority bungalow, in a town over 20 miles away from all their support networks, accessible health services, extended family and the village where they had lived all their lives. They were even more isolated, and unable to access the village without private transport (Gauntlett, 2008). Their two adult children and one 17-year-old child were also made homeless as a result of this eviction. When they moved, despite efforts made by the

community workers and medical professionals, Len refused help, saying his life was over. When Len died Ruth commented:

> It was like he had just given up as he was far away from all his family; his kids were homeless and his friends too far away. He saw no point in life anymore (Ruth).

In the course of the project – from June 2016 – July 2017 – there were three deaths, (2 from cancer and one from diabetes), all of them involving people under the age of 60. This age is significantly lower than the national average and replicates the findings from other pieces of research. Ruth told us that several of the community had sat up all night with the body, while the men sat outside, telling stories and talking about their memories of Len.

In their study Laurie and Niemeyer (2008:186), evidenced that being surrounded by extended family and drawing on strong religious beliefs means that the bereaved 'gain strength from practical support', such as the provision of food, religious and spiritual rituals and by having people around them. The community in the study did not declare any religious beliefs.

However, they stated that they always hold the service in a church and their dead will always be buried rather than cremated. This specific Gypsy community celebrate death and grieve for their dead in a way which is similar to other Gypsy groups. These traditions are similar across groups and included the practices of sitting up and holding wakes; 'the origins of these Gypsy traditions or religious practices are unclear and the question is whether they emerged from organised religious practice or cultural tradition' (Rogers, 2016: 220). Either way the important factor is that these ritual practices offer a form of support following bereavement *(ibid.).* Traditions include:

- They hold a wake, the celebratory event is similar, with traditional hymns and the men group together and separate themselves from the women.
- The women are the ones who prepare the body, organize the flowers, arrange the sitting with the dead and notify relatives and friends.
- Although the window of Charlie's house was taken out to let the coffin through, there is also a Gypsy custom where the windows of the house are opened as the coffin leaves, so that the spirit of the person is free to leave
- There is a strong preference for burial rather than cremation

For this group, poverty and isolation is apparent. When attending the funerals, I observed that there was no wake after the ceremony and in the case of Len's funeral, Ruth was unable to get home again. The support from community members in attending the wake and celebrating the

death was evident, demonstrating that they pull together in times of adversity – differences which have arisen in life, appear to be buried with the dead person.

Discrimination

> 'There is nothing different from you and me except the fate of our birth – this is the bit that annoys me. I can't help me being born a Gypsy – I don't have two horns. I'm not a criminal, nothing not even litter dropping. And to them we are all criminals, we are all sponging off the country. I've worked all my life never had anything off the state'(Sid)

A lot of discussion was centred upon discrimination (Phinney, 1992). The effect of stigma is to undermine the possibilities of acceptance and subsequent interaction with mainstream society (Goffman, 1963).

Eileen:	In everyday life we are always discriminated against – we still get It day to day. I just turn a blind eye … it's against the law. But the law don't treat you fair and you get treated as if you are wrong … and it's the same with the council … I could tell you a lot of stories about them.
Nancy:	I'm a Gypsy – the most hated culture of all…in the old days you could be killed for being a Gypsy.
Sid:	Nothing will change – we can get called a pikey and a dirty Gypsy and the police don't do nothing. if you called a black person a n….. the police are straight there - but what's the difference … they were born and live and die the same as us.
Eileen:	The police don't see us as human beings, they see us as dirt and treat us like dirt… we're just dirt and dogs under their feet

Table 5.31: discussion about discrimination

As Smith and Greenfields identified in their study (2013), respondents overwhelmingly stated a preference for living amongst 'our own kind' (Smith and Greenfields,2013:156). Goffman (1963) argues that stigmatized people find it easier to bear their 'spoiled' identity by associating with people who are in the same situation. For the participants, the need to find refuge in their own ethnic group is natural as they live in proximity to one another in a community that is isolated from the rest of the village, with high levels of tension between them and their Guadje neighbours (Petriu, 2012).

Rose:	It would change if we weren't discriminated so much by those people who have more money.
Patricia:	And if people better off than me didn't judge me by my appearance and accepted me as an equal. Because those snobs are not better than me.

Table 5.32: discussion about being judged

School

While often presented as a means of empowering the disempowered, the commitment to integrate children from minority and marginal groups into mainstream education tends to overlook the wider social and cultural outcomes (Levinson, 2008: 235). The assumption that the acquisition of a standard literacy will equip such youngsters with the skills that will provide greater opportunities, along with social and economic flexibility, tends to dismiss other skills and knowledge acquired in home settings; furthermore, it both reifies and privileges schooled notions of literacy *(ibid.).*

For the majority of the participants, the first time they experienced feeling excluded was when they started school, (Harro, 2008) as this was the first time, they were separated from their own community and forced to mix with the settled community (Stets and Burke, 2015). From 1892 -1978, the village had its own infant school which provided a service on the doorstep of the families. The group have fond memories of the schoolteachers there:

Eileen: I loved that little school. The teachers really cared about us.
Len: Yes, they used to start the day with breakfast and they made us feel welcome

When discussing their school years, some of the community said that their problems started when they moved for the infant to the junior school in the next village. Despite the persistent view that most Gypsy children leave formal education earlier than the current statutory school leaving age (Van Cleemput, 2007), this particular community are exceptions in this, with all respondents (apart from three of the men), having attended school until the age of 16, the standard leaving age at that time:

Rose: I've known Gypsy people all my life and I've never known anyone to leave school before 16.
Nancy: I hated school. But I still went to school until I was 16. I was very naughty about school and didn't want to go. But I had to go as my mum made me

Table 5.33: and above school

Eileen and Patricia explained that they were made to go to school as their parents were frightened of losing their homes; they felt that they would be penalized if the children didn't attend:

'I had the welfare on my back. I knew I'd lose my house if the kids didn't go' (Eileen).

Some of the group said they coped with the ill treatment in school by staying with their own group:

Jessie:	When I went to secondary school there were other Gypsy children there and we all used to stay together and look out for each other, the other children knew we would not take any bullying so gave us a wide birth. We would always look out for each other because that it what Gypsies do.
Patricia:	We were made to go to school. Other kids did try to call us names and that but we stuck together in our group. I didn't like that school much but stayed until I was 16.

Table 5.34: discussion about 'sticking together' at school

(See Chapter 3 – self segregation)

However, despite staying at school until the statutory leaving age, the adults reported that their overall attainment levels were low, and they had all left school without any qualifications. Some of the group had attended specialist schools, and some felt they were put there because they didn't fit in (Stets and Burke, 2014):

Joe:	I don't know why they sent me away to that school. No one ever explained.
Len:	I was sent to a special school, but I never used to go. I only used to talk to one person as she was the only Gypsy and I didn't like them that weren't Gypsies.
Sammy:	I didn't like my school and I would try and run away. I learnt more from being with the Gypsies who came every summer and put their benders by the river and they had horses. They taught me about life. I learnt nothing at school.
Billy:	I didn't go to school properly – I always went out with my dad when I could. I didn't like it at school. But I didn't leave until I was about 16. Some people used to call me a pikey I would get into fights. I did all sorts of jobs with my dad and I learnt more that way.

Table 5.35: – ' special school'

Recent literature in the field of Gypsy education tends to take a position that places a higher value on knowledge/skills gained at home (Smith, L., 2004; Derrington and Kendall, 2007).

Isobelle:	I learnt more when I left school. Like maths, I've learnt maths as I've got older and I can work it out for myself now
Len:	Yeah…me too. I learnt more from my family than I did at school.

Table 5.36: skills

It is interesting to see respondents' comments (which are replicated in other studies) about the value they put on learning life skills and their feelings that they learnt more from family than from school (Bhopal, 2011). Learning life skills at a young age was clearly more beneficial to them.

At one of the workshops, Millie was making a picture of a deer for the wall hanging. Calling me over to the table where she was working, she said:

> Millie: 'Do you remember when we went to that culture evening and my dad was cooking a rabbit on the barbeque?'

I replied that I did remember.

> Millie: Well I remember saying to you I may not be able to read and write, but I can show you how to skin a deer'.

I recalled the event well, as I was taken aback as Millie was only about 7 at the time.

This concurs with Smith's view that a child's identity is shaped by the norms, values, and behaviours of the culture in which he or she is raised (Smith, L., 2004 :243). The traditional situation within Romani communities is for the family and the extended kinship network to constitute the primary influences in a child's life (Smith, 1997). Through participation in the social and economic life of the community, self-confidence, respect for others, and a strong sense of identity are acquired (Liégeois, 1994). By working alongside parents and other family members, children gain expertise in the skills deemed essential by their community.

Where ascription information is available, through school data collection for example, it suggests that Gypsies and Travellers will often conceal their true ethnicity for fear of prejudice and discrimination and social exclusion (Ryder, 2014; Cemlyn, 1992; Acton, 1997). This trend is evident in the Census data for 2011 where for the first time separate ethnic coding for Gypsies and Travellers was included. The results of the Census highlight that identifying 'true' ascription remains an issue, with only 58,000 or 0.1% of the population identifying themselves as Gypsies and Travellers (ONS, 2011). Despite the fact that the census does only identify population figures for England and Wales, there is a significant shortfall in contrast to the estimated numbers of 300,000 (Rogers, 2016).

For the men in particular, their school attendance was affected by the way they felt they were treated (Harro, 2008; Elias, 1991):

Bob: I wasn't called Pikey at school, cos that's a newer thing but I was called the usual, Cacker, Gypo. I got into fights because of it and I never went back after junior school.

Joe: I didn't like the secondary school … I felt I wasn't treated that fairly. I used to be called names and so I hated school and in the end, I stopped going

Table 5.37: slurs

In order to avoid any possible discrimination, Rose said she did not disclose her heritage to anyone at school (Harro, 2008):

Rose: When I first started, there was a gate in the school – Gypsy kids on one side and others on the other side. It was horrible. There was a Gypsy water fountain and one for the other non-Gypsy kids. So, I didn't tell anyone at I was a Gypsy, and so no one knew. And no one ever asked. I mixed with all the kids, Gypsies and non-Gypsies. We didn't want people to look down on us, thinking we were dirty and that we were thieves.

It was only when she reached adulthood (as found by Rutherford, 1990) that Rose said that she began to openly acknowledge and feel proud of her group's identity and claim it for herself:

Nancy: We went to do some talks for the diversity forum … do you remember Rose that the women there didn't think we were Gypsies … they said we didn't look

Rose: Yes because of the way we were dressed! She said 'but you look normal!'

Nancy: And another time we did that workshop at a big conference in …that was good …. everyone asking us questions and us being able to put our points across.

Rose: It was good because people listened to us and they seemed really interested.

Nancy: When you look back, we've done a lot of talks and workshops about our heritage and spoken about what it was like for our parents and ancestors.

Rose: Yes, I'm proud of what we did.

Table 5.38: sharing knowledge

Rose was proud of the contribution she made and the responses she gained from the audiences, which provides a counter example to the social negativity generally experienced in other situations by the group. Their contributions in the way of sharing information with Gaudjes have deepened both theirs and others' understanding of Gypsy identity.

Those with young children demonstrated their commitment to ensuring they attended school:

Nancy: And we want our kids to go to school …it's better for them.

Joe: I pushed my daughter into education and to live in the other world. I wanted my children to be educated; I believe that by being educated you will have opportunities and a life. I did not want them to have my life, to be poor, to be called the names and be treated like me.

Nancy: I hated school because I wasn't very academic. We were picked on at school. Not really picked on as I am not really the sort of person who would be picked on. But we were called names and that. Always dirty Gypsy.

Table 5.39: commitment to education

The group reported that although things have improved, there are still occasions when their children experience discrimination at school (Bhopal, 2011).

Rose: A couple of years ago I started to do talks to the teachers and it helped because the Gypsy kids were getting into trouble at school. The local school do teacher training there and they asked for help in training them about Gypsy heritage … so I went. This was round about the time of My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding, and I wanted to put things straight. I wanted to get the message right. It did make things a lot better because people understood us more. The head started to change his views and he embraced the fact that there were so many Gypsy children in the school. That's when things got better for the kids.

Kitty: Things are better but sometimes people twist things around.

Sammy: What - at the school?

Kitty: My son came home the other day and said the other kids were talking about him not living in a house. The school got a book out and showed the kids a book about Gypsies with a lot of photos of family stuff. I was annoyed they did that without asking… and he does live in a house anyway. The book was about Gypsies living on a site so it was all wrong

Sammy What did you do?

Kitty: I went into the school and spoke to them … and they apologised

Table 5.40: children at school

Nancy said she feels it is important that children are taught about their heritage at school so that they and the other kids understand their history:

'Our children have never learned anything about their own history, culture and customs. Instead, every reference to Gypsies that they hear is bad. They hear only negative stereotypes everywhere they turn Our children should learn instead to feel pride in the rich heritage of the Gypsy people'(Nancy).

Traditional lifestyles among Gypsy groups (Hawes and Perez, 1996; Levinson, 2010) have been threatened by internal and external factors in recent years, and among many Gypsy children, are no longer salient in their lives (Levinson,2008). Some Gypsy children whose families have taken on a sedentary existence, have increasingly similar lifestyles to those of other, local, non-Gypsy children (Levinson, 2008). 'At the same time, the resolution among many Gypsy families to retain a distinctive way of life has ensured that certain features have remained' (Levinson,2008:240). It is interesting to see that Joe refers to school as 'the other world', confirming again the othering and self-segregation.

Dirty Gypsy

People reported that the word 'dirty' generally appeared in every verbal slur or insult made against them. Although there was a level of acceptance that these insults seemed inevitable, respondents also said that their mothers ensured they always had clean clothes for school, and they felt that it was unfair:

Nancy: We were always called 'dirty Gypsy'…I don't know why this was cos our clothes were always clean. Mum always made sure we had the right clothes for school and we got new uniforms every year.

Joe: I was always called dirty even though I was not dirty… my mum boiled my clothes all the time and did her best… but we were poor and my clothes never fit properly or looked nice because we didn't have an iron or anything like that. I used to get embarrassed about my clothes; my mum however was a very strong woman and never worried about what others said.

Eileen: I wasn't happy there at the school. I remember that I got picked on a lot. I was called names like dirty Gypsy, Gyppo. The little infant school was fine … it was the junior school which was the worst.

Isobelle: I hated school. I only had friends that were Gypsies – apart from one who was as good as.

Joe: Things changed when we moved into a house. It was worse… I was persecuted for being a Gypsy, ignored by teachers, shouted out and ignored by non - Gypsy people who lived nearby. After that Mum tried to send us to school, but we wouldn't go.

Eileen: They would always pick on us… it was awful. It made you feel awful because you were the first they would point the finger at when something went missing. And from what the grandkids tell me, it hasn't changed at all.
People call us dirty, but we are cleaner than Gaudjes … we are just people …just people like anyone else. I've always said there's good

and bad in every clan. Whatever you are …race, creed, colour, there's good and there's bad.

Table 5.41: discrimination at school

The traditional views of discrimination persist and have continued throughout the participants' lives; as many felt the settled community treated Gypsies differently (Powell, 2016). The group as a whole felt that the 'authorities' had little or no understanding of their culture and that this was a barrier to progress and a reason that their children were likely to be bullied and find it difficult to cope (Elias, 1991).

'It would get better if the Government or whoever is running this country have more feelings for our culture and community. Then it might stop'(Joe)

Social separation is partly a response to the antagonism experienced (or anticipated) from the wider society based upon widely held stereotypes associating Gypsies and Travellers with dirt, criminality and disorder (Turner, 2002).

This outsider status, and feelings of discrimination, were extended beyond school and participants were able to identify actual events and times in their lives when they felt discriminated against. Respondents said that there are always rumours about them from neighbours, false accusations from the police and discrimination from society in general (Austin, 2005).

In terms of being called 'dirty' the community accept that this is a slur which has been held against them for the majority of their lives – starting with school as explained by respondents. Elias and Scotson (1994, p xxvii) identify the labelling of outsider groups as 'dirty and unhygienic' as a 'universal feature of insider-outsider relations and the attribution and denial of such claims are an important element in the symbolic struggle over group status at the neighbourhood level.' Smith and Greenfields highlight the fact that the nature of stereotypes is that they are fluid and malleable, which allows the long-held associations of Gypsies with dirt, crime and disorder to be reversed and levelled against their neighbours (2013:138). The study group, as evidenced by Smith and Greenfields (2013), described their own hygiene practices as being very clean – cleaner than those of those outside of their community for example in terms of food preparation (see above). The group reported that this slur is still used against them on a regular basis; they accept that this is the way it is and yet are hurt and retreat into their own group for safety, suggesting that the group are at stage 3 of minority group identity (Phinney, 1990:272) see Table 3.1.

Neighbours

As with the study group, Greenfields and Smith (2012:7), found that in their study respondents 'frequently claimed that local authority and social housing officers were as hostile towards them as were their neighbours, offering them a poor-quality service and being reluctant to intervene when racist incidents occurred in the neighbourhood'. On occasions during the workshops, conversations about discrimination experienced by the group were centred upon neighbours, and in particular, Len and Ruth's housing situation. Ruth told us that a neighbour had shouted to her one morning:

'We need to get these dirty Gypsies out '.

The group expressed feelings of shock at this statement:

Nancy: You do know that this is against the law Ruth, don't you?
Eileen: Yes, it's a hate crime
Ruth: But the police won't believe me will they and I can't afford a solicitor
Nancy: These people should not be allowed to get away with this

Table 5.42: racist neighbours

Nancy told us that a recent public meeting had been held locally, which had been attended by about 30 people, including representatives from the local authority housing and police departments, and yet excluding the Gypsy community. She thought it had been organized by the local authority and none of the community had been invited to represent themselves. Ruth said that the meeting had been held because local people had been moaning about her and other families and that she had been threatened with eviction as a result of complaints:

Nancy: These people in our road are getting to the harassment stage. The trouble is though that people are frightened of losing their houses.
Rose: Yes, Cos my granny was always scared of losing her house when she lived down the lane.
Ruth: The council said they'd evict me if we didn't stick to a curfew and that housing woman threatens me all the time with eviction.

Table 5.43: neighbours

Even after three decades have passed, people in this community still feel threatened that they may lose their homes, (that they or their ancestors did not choose to move into in the first place).

Nancy said she felt that the aim of the meeting was to get Ruth moved out:

Nancy: Someone told me the other day that this racist stuff with the neighbours is all happening again. Even though I live in the road, I didn't even know anything about this meeting the neighbours have

called. I knew nothing about it at all until the other day. That in itself is wrong –my daughter heard about it from a friend who was told by another person who lives up the hill – so the whole hill knows about it and we didn't …and that's breaking confidentiality. How can it happen that you can have a meeting about one person and it not be kept confidential? How come everyone else can find out about it. It is not right… it's really not right. None of us living there were invited so we weren't allowed to go.

Rose: But I guess anyone can have a meeting without inviting everyone - so we could have a meeting without inviting anyone, couldn't we? ....
but if it's an official one that's different.

Eileen: Yes, but if it's about the road, and they said its official, then surely the whole road should know about it.

Nancy: Yes, I agree of course but what I'm saying is that they are allowed to have confidential private meetings, but if it's a public meeting, they have to invite everyone- other people knew about it.

Table 5.44: public meeting

Nancy: It reminds me of the 1947 law, when they just moved people on to the compounds without even talking to them.

Ruth: Well the man in our road said 'you are dirty thieving Gypsies and we're going to get you out'

Jane: Have you ever considered challenging this discrimination?

Nancy: The trouble is though I don't mind speaking out, the others are frightened of losing their houses. Cos my Granny was always scared of losing her house when she lived down the lane. Every little thing. People go looking for it. People start getting a bit obsessed. That's what they are like.

Table 5.45 – challenging the system

Although there is some recognition that these racist comments constitute a hate crime, however some respondents said it was pointless going to the police as they 'would do nothing' (Nancy, Ruth and Eileen).

There followed an animated discussion about what was happening in the road where Nancy and Ruth both lived. Some people felt that the public meeting that was called was unlawful as no one representing the Gypsy community was invited to attend. In addition, Ruth had been warned that a housing officer was going to visit her the following day. She said she did not understand what was happening and needed support. In the absence of anyone else being available, I agreed to be there for the meeting.

When I got to the house Ruth was waiting for me and although there was a fire burning in the grate, I was struck by the bareness and lack of comfort in the room. Ruth thought she was going to be evicted so she was very nervous Soon after, the housing officer (Ann) arrived and I

explained that I was there on a voluntary basis as on behalf of the community group as no one else had been available.

Ann explained that at the last meeting with the family Ruth had been told there were a lot of concerns about the property and going on there. She explained that as a result of the complaints a number of local people (about 30) who lived nearby had called a meeting with housing, the local council, and the police to discuss the issues being raised. There had been several allegations, including one that there was cock fighting going on in the car park next to the house, and that the couple were dealing in scrap. The housing officer reminded Ruth that cock fighting is illegal and if she suspected this was going on, she would have to notify the police.

Ann then emphasized the fact that Ruth must not let either her 20-year-old daughter or her 17-year-old son stay at the house. If he did, then she stood the chance of being evicted. I asked Ann what was going to happen to these two, as they would now be considered homeless.

Ann:	I have no idea, she's not my problem.'
Jane:	But this young woman will have nowhere to live, and she is 5 months pregnant.
Ann:	I know but she was housed before and was evicted so we will not be helping her again. She'll have to find somewhere …. sofa surf or something
Jane:	Can I just say that I think it is completely unrealistic to expect Ruth to turn her heavily pregnant and homeless daughter and her homeless son away over the Christmas holiday. Whatever she has done, she is her daughter after all.

Table 5.46: homelessness

Ann shrugged her shoulders and said that they would have to sort themselves out. I had the feeling that Ruth didn't really understand the implications of what the housing officer was saying.

This meeting yet again provides insight into how complex the relationships are between this marginalised group and the state. 'Suspicion and mistrust of authority is confirmed in the often conflicted and negative relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and front-line employees of public services and welfare agencies; 'this results in respondents being more dependent on informal kin and community-based forms of care than official sources of 'help' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 103).

By pursuing such oppressive policies against Gypsies, practitioners serve to accentuate the situation by reinforcing stereotypes, contributing to the notion that settled Gypsies and Travellers are not ''real'' pure-blood Romanies but a 'sub-standard' group lacking the superior human virtue of the settled population (Powell,2008: 106).

I noticed that the housing officer's manner was abrupt at times in both her tone of voice and non-verbal communication and body language. I felt she was critical and judgemental from the start of the interview and that her attitude spilt over towards me – as if I am guilty of whatever it might be, merely by association. I wondered if this was the way she normally spoke to clients in the course of her work. I noticed that she appeared reluctant to make eye contact with me, which I guess was understandable as my role was simply to 'be there'. I just couldn't understand how someone could be expected to turn their own homeless children away when they had nowhere else to go. Especially as Alex is five months pregnant and not in a stable relationship, and under legislation, (the Children Act 1989), Ruth's son Christopher is still eligible for services as is the unborn child who also needed protection. Parry et al (2007), identified a defensively hostile demeanor amongst Gypsies and Travellers when dealing with officialdom, based on past experiences and the anticipation of prejudice. Likewise, Smith and Greenfields (2013: 211), also noted a lack of cultural awareness amongst officials which included blatant hostility from government officials and other public service employees even in areas where there were large long-established Gypsies and Traveller populations.

I felt empathy for Ruth and at the same time frustrated by the system – a system that was prepared to make a young person of 17 years homeless and not offer any support to him. I knew it was unrealistic to expect Ruth to turn her children away. In addition, Ruth had been asked to take out an injunction against her eldest son to prevent him from returning to the home. If any of the three children returned to the home, Ruth was told she would be evicted. Ruth seemed to accept the allegations made without questioning the housing officer. She was on her own as Len refused to come downstairs, evidencing again that it is the women who are generally expected to deal with household matters and liaise with service providers (Powell, 2016; Okely, 1983). However, Ruth did not appear able to challenge the housing officer despite the fact that she denied the allegations and she had lived in the house for over 40 years.

I was shocked by the level of deprivation, the lack of power experienced by Ruth and Len (Powell, 2016), and the hopelessness of their situation I decided to seek some advice and to make a referral to both adults and children's services and would let Elise know the details of the meeting. As I am now in a different role, I felt completely powerless to do anything to help this family. I knew that Christopher is still regarded as a child and therefore should be receiving some support under the Children Act, 1989. I wished there was more I could do to help. After a few weeks, Ruth and her partner Len were evicted and were rehoused in a small one bedroomed bungalow 20 miles away – away from all their contacts and support networks. Len

refused any medical help for his serious health needs and shortly after moving into the bungalow he died.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented rich descriptive and positive accounts of how this community express and sustain their identity. They experienced feeling that their culture as Gypsies is being eroded by mainstream society due to their lack of ability to pursue their traditional ways, to live independently, and to be accepted and valued as contributors to society. When given the opportunity to explore their Gypsy identity with outsiders as discussed by Nancy, they receive a positive response from someone they view as 'outsiders'.

The group talk openly about the discrimination they face and the hostility shown to them by various sections of society. Their sense of un-belonging is also linked to these negative interactions with others in society; this has left them feeling like outsiders, which has subsequently led to a high degree of self-segregation. The responses of marginalised groups to social exclusion and discrimination may actually reinforce negative stereotypes and increase the social isolation of those groups Greenfields and Smith (2010). At the same time, cohesiveness and solidarity tends to increase the collective exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers with inter-group relations, marked by a high degree of mutual distrust and suspicion, which in turn reinforces dependence on those same networks and divide neighbourhoods further (*ibid.).*

The way people in this Gypsy community relate to one another seems to match the observations of Grancea (2010), that ethnic solidarity is achieved through interaction. Common ethnicity can therefore set the grounds for group formation. The family remains the primary means through which ethnic identity is transmitted and ethnic self-consciousness acquired (Alba, 1990: 125). In the face of discrimination and feelings of powerlessness, their group, although not able to resolve the challenges facing them, offers some source of comfort to them.

The shared history, practices and culture, the feeling that they had some common origins and were touched by the same fate, and even the stigma they all bear, certainly brings people together; many marginalized groups find identity in their marginalization. However, it is 'the day-to-day interactions that maintain their sense of communion' (Petriu, 2012:18).

It has been observed that the structure of the traditional Gypsy/Traveller extended family has been eroded partly by increasing settlement in inappropriate 'nuclear' family housing, which physically separates the extended family (Powell, 2011). Evidence provided by this study proves that for this group, the extended family as a support network is alive and well, as most of the extended family and friends live within relatively easy reach. 'It is this feature of many G/R/T groups which has enabled their preservation and cultural continuity, despite the persistence of asymmetric power relations and assimilatory hostility from wider society' (Powell,2016:150). For Walsh (2006), an individual's capacity for resilience is determined by the interplay between family relationships and the environment, with relationships and experiences interwoven over the life course and across generations. 'The maintenance of a distinct G/R/T culture over the long-term is dependent upon the reproduction of a very strong we-image, resulting in a strong group orientation and the maintenance of the extended family as the primary unit of identification throughout the life-course (Powell ,2016:149). 'Consequently, positive relationships and experiences lead to positive outcomes, however when family stability and relationships are debilitated as a result of stressful life events such as poverty, unemployment, poor health or following a family bereavement the outcomes can be very different' (Rogers, 2016:34).

In the past Gypsies were directly dependent on a sedentary or host community within which they supplied goods, services and occasional labour (Okely, 1983). Now they remain dependent on the state for their livelihood for different reasons. They are unable to provide services to the wider community whilst at the same time they remain dependent on the state (the local authority housing and the welfare system) for their survival. It is this overriding threat that undermines their confidence in campaigning for their rights and compounded their level of acceptance which prevents them from acting.

Rather than stimulating community development and inclusive ways of working, the relationship between the study group and the state is one of unequal power. This has preserved a set of life strategies and values that are different from those maintained by wider society and Richardson and Ryder (2012:43), believe that this has major implications for the future of Gypsy and Traveller identity. They question if new and inclusive partnerships between Gypsies and Travellers and the state be formed that herald not only new strategies but also genuine inclusion and intercultural dialogue and policy frameworks? *(ibid.).*

The settlement of Gypsy communities has resulted in an increasing 'economic bifurcation of the community between those who successfully adapted elements of traditional economic

practices by moving into construction work, trading and associated areas, and a significant population of long-term unemployed and economically inactive Gypsies and Travellers. Being housed in a rurally isolated area remains a key causal mechanism in their continuing social and economic exclusion (Greenfields and Smith 2010).

Elements of Bruner's two narratives are relevant to the respondents (1986). There is a general view of the past as being 'glorious', the present as 'exploitation' and the future as 'assimilation'. The group is made up of adaptable, creative and resilient individuals, and yet there no 'resistance' movement. This appears to be based upon the historical fear of losing their homes, and authority in general; this has resulted in fear of solidarity and has created distance between their group and other Gypsy groups. The acceptance that the possibility of change is unlikely, persists.

In the next chapter, I present and analyse the artwork which was produced by the respondents during the community workshops including:

- Photographs of the respondents creating their artefacts during the workshops
- Discussions of the work produced

Chapter 6: Analysis of the Art work

In this chapter, I begin by providing some background information about the first two sessions in order to set the scene for how the project progressed. This also includes a reflective account of those initial meetings and analysis of both what happened then and what led to further developments within the project. I continue by showing some photographic evidence of members of the community, working both individually and collaboratively together with images of the work created.

I begin by explaining the origins and progress of the artwork and include examples of how participants created a range of artefacts from the outset, without any direction from myself. Through their creations, the participants provide a significant expression of their identity and their cultural heritage. In addition to transcripts about the artwork and group discussions, I have added my transcript of the introductory meeting (the diabetes awareness information session) where I met for the first time with the community. This account illustrates how some participants unexpectedly use creativity in a variety of ways and how the assumptions made about the community by professionals are often value laden. In addition, the experience caused me to reflect on my own initial assumptions, and how this enabled me to re-evaluate initial plans for the sessions and my thoughts about how the project would progress.

I continue with an analysis of the artwork which was created by the participants in the workshop sessions, providing examples of how these are representative of the responses made by the group to the study question. By using examples of the discussions which took place during the workshops and the 'making' of the artefacts I aim to demonstrate how those participating express and sustain their identity, contributing answers to the research question.

Introduction - Health awareness session
30/6/2016

Having met with the community worker (Elise), it was agreed that the project could run alongside the times when her group would normally meet in a local hall. We arranged that I would attend the first session where she was facilitating a health awareness session. This would give me an opportunity to meet with members of the community, to discuss my ideas with them and to confirm their willingness to participate.

When I arrived at the hall, I was surprised by the number of people gathered in the room. A large crowd of both men and women were sitting in the hall around several large tables. I recognised some of the people there but had not seen them for many years. After the usual catching up and banter and conversation, the facilitators asked us to sit down - two people from Diabetes UK. They had set up tables with a range of information leaflets on display. It struck me how official they looked in their diabetes UK polo -shirts. I was also aware that the table created a barrier between them and us.

As they began their talk, the facilitators started asking the participant a range of questions in what I felt was patronising in tone. I was shocked to see how many people in the room openly said they had diabetes and the seriousness of their conditions. I wondered if this could be attributed to genetics or lifestyle choices.

Suddenly, in the middle of the talk, a member of the community (Ruth) came bursting into the room. She greeted me loudly saying 'Hello Mrs Peacock', as she came and sat next to me, clearly remembering me. She grabbed my book (where I had been making notes) and asked – demanded rather - a piece of paper and a pen. She chose a red pen from a small selection that I had in front of me. As she began completing her picture, she Immediately started telling an upsetting story about something that had just happened to her, and she was evidently (as displayed by her body language), very upset and agitated. At times, her pen strokes were forceful, as she was pressing her pen down hard onto the sheet of paper.

As she was drawing on the paper, Ruth began telling me a story about something that had just happened to her. She was focussing on her picture whilst talking. At times, her pen strokes were becoming aggressive – as she was really pressing her pen down hard on the paper.
She said that she had been at home and the 'gavvers' (police) had just come and raided her house.

> 'They took everything ... even my mobile phone, and I've got no way of keeping in contact with anyone …they even took my shovel' (Ruth).

When I asked her why they had done this, Ruth replied:

> 'I don't know and now Albie can't even phone me (Albie her youngest son is in the care system). 'I've done nothing wrong…they are bastards.'(Ruth)

I suspected that this might be something to do with her older son – he was known to be a substance user and I had been told he recently been released from prison. Ruth carried on talking about what had happened and I sat and listened, showing her that I was doing so by

nodding and reflecting to her now and then to ensure I had heard her correctly. I had been looking at her face, listening attentively whilst she was talking, and when I glanced down at the paper, I was very surprised to see that she was in the middle of drawing a Gypsy caravan, a Bow top wagon (Vardo).

At the end of the diabetes session the presenters asked if anyone could tell them how diabetes affects the blood stream. At this point Ruth stood up and gave a very clear explanation of what happens to the body and why diabetes is so dangerous. Others also answered a series of questions in an informative manner. I was quite taken aback about the level of Ruth's knowledge and also that of the others in the room.

The next person to present was a woman talking about exercise. I predicted that this would be as patronizing as the first talk – but I was wrong. She broke everything down into detail and told us that it wasn't a question of going to the gym, but being more active – she gave us the number of calories that even small activities burn - such as washing up and dusting and general housework – it was interesting and her style was friendly and up-beat and she engaged well with the group.

When Ruth had finished her drawing, she handed it to me, saying:

'Here, this is for you Mrs Peacock' (Ruth).

Ruth's image is significant as it was created even before the beginning of the project before I had had the chance to talk to most of the community about the ideas. It was completely spontaneous. Despite the absence of people in the picture, everything Ruth has drawn and placed in the picture would support the family, in terms of living accommodation, food, cooking implements and a water barrel. This implies a sense of a living wagon. Even though this was an impromptu drawing, and was completed very quickly, there is a high level of detail in the composition. Ruth said she had included all the things you would need to take travelling.

Image 6.1: Ruth's Vardo – red ballpoint pen sketch

As the project progressed, I found that the image of the Vardo was recreated in various forms throughout the course of the study, which was fascinating.

Reflection

Gibbs (2007) argues that

> 'it is not sufficient simply to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting upon this experience, it may be quickly forgotten, or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and the thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalisations or concepts can be generated, and it is generalisations that allow new situations to be tackled effectively '(Gibbs, 2007:84).

Using Gibbs reflective cycle (1988) enabled me to think about aspects of the community meeting, and plan for the project. In analysing Ruth's drawing, I know that some art therapists believe that red symbolizes anger; red has several links to hostility, and anthropologists evidence its association with anger and aggression, largely shared across all cultures (Bleicher,2012). Ruth was expressing the emotion of anger as she was drawing. However, the Vardo is clearly seen by her as a symbol of a traditional way of life and she said that the image made her feel calm. It is apparent that even in times of distress, the notion of travelling and the history associated with the Vardo, is a significant marker of Ruth's identity which she wanted to share with me, even in the most challenging of circumstances.

When asked if it were the activity of drawing or the subject matter itself that helped her to feel calm, her reply was 'both'. She said that she finds drawing relaxing, adding that the image of the caravan meant 'freedom' to her, expressing her desire 'to just get away from here.' Ruth had used the iconic and romantic image of the Gypsy wagon to communicate her feelings of frustration and anger, at a time of extreme stress, saying that the drawing had helped her to feel calm. Travelling, tradition and the past is clearly intrinsic to Ruth's identity (Le Bas, 2018). At the end of the event, Ruth presented me with her picture. Both on this day and throughout the course of the project, I wondered why some participants such as Ruth (and others along the way) were keen to give me copies of their work. Ruth's reply was simply that 'it was a gift'. I wondered if it was to reinforce a sense of pride in their heritage, which people wanted to share with myself, as an outsider, to build trust.

In terms of my own feelings I was taken aback at the number of people whom had attended the workshop – I was to learn later that they were given a £5.00 Tesco voucher in return for attending. I was surprised that the group were being paid to attend the health awareness session, as I was concerned that payment could be seen as coercion or incentive for participation; however there are arguments in support of the use of payment or reimbursement which suggests that payment demonstrates respect for the individual and equalises the power relationship between researcher and participant (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000).

> 'Although payment is often welcomed, we have found simply 'being heard' and involved in research is sometimes worth far more'
> (Brown and Scullion, 2010: 20).

However, for economically deprived groups such as Gypsies and Travellers, reimbursement for time and expenses is a significant factor in enabling participation, as was the case in this health awareness meeting.

I was delighted to see group members again, and to meet new people. The reaction to the idea of the project and acceptance by the group, gave me encouragement. I felt enthused by their response. I suspected that there were issues which would be raised by the community, and felt somewhat saddened by Ruth's story, which I felt was a true account.

In terms of my own learning from this experience I realised that I had made several assumptions and reflecting on this reminded me that I need to keep an open mind as I began working with the community. I had assumed that the raid on Ruth's house had somehow been connected to her son, although I had no foundation on which to build this assumption. Yet I

was also aware that in the past there had been complaints made from the community about their unfair treatment by the police, and I was disappointed to think that this may still be happening.
In addition, I had also assumed that the group would have little knowledge about their own health conditions and was proved wrong in this, with several members very capably explaining the causes and symptoms of this disease which affects so many of the community.

I felt that the style of the two different presenters was interesting in terms of the response from those who were in the audience. The second presenter used a less patronising approach and immediately drew the attention of the audience by the empowering way in which she engaged with the group and involved them in the discussions from the beginning. This is an important aspect of engaging with marginalised groups. Parry et al's (2004), study remains the most influential health report relating to Gypsies and Travellers to date with findings suggesting that the health problems of the Gypsy and Traveller community are two to five times greater than found within the majority population (Rogers, 2016). Parry et al (2004) suggest that settled or housed Gypsies and Travellers have poorer health than those following a mobile lifestyle, particularly psychological problems attributed to the lack of mobility and loss of traditional mobile lifestyle -also confirmed in my own research (Peacock, 2010). Greenfields and Smith (2010:15) concur with this view suggesting the reason for this is 'cultural dislocation', in which the change in cultural lifestyle, aversion to bricks and mortar, loss of mobility and often being separated from close family members promotes feelings of isolation (Rogers, 2016; Peacock and Herbert, 2014). This isolation is often exacerbated by experiences of prejudice and discrimination, causing isolation from the sedentary community as well as fear of social integration *(ibid.).* Parry et al (2007) recommend using specialist health workers to deliver services as one way of improving access for Gypsy and Traveller communities, which is what Elise had organised for the community. However, it is also clear that a culturally sensitive approach provided by culturally competent staff is needed in order to fully engage with marginalised groups.

The first art workshop
5/7/2016

The first session took place on 30th June 2016. I had prepared several resources and a range of art and craft equipment– e.g. felt tips, paints, art paper. I know there needs to be a balance between providing some ideas or instructions to follow and giving people a 'blank canvas' to work on.

Image 6.2: The Village Hall surroundings – the hall is in a beautiful setting but is rurally isolated

Having many years of experience as a community artist really helped me in the planning stages. I also had applied for some funding to spend on resources, which enabled me to provide a range of materials. I have learnt that by planning and being really organized, it is possible to work in an informal way and this also limits the stress. Being structured in terms of providing resources and organising them in such a way that everyone has the same opportunity to use them, enables me as the facilitator to provide a relaxed and informal setting. Facing a plain sheet of paper and being asked to 'draw what you want' can be very daunting. So, I felt a simple activity was the best way to stimulate conversation and the aim was to talk to the group and to plan future work and discuss the project with a wider audience than I had done so far. I took a range of enlarged and laminated images for people to peruse, not those just relating to Gypsies. For interest, I had also included some of the artwork of Sven Berlin, a local artist who painted the New Forest Gypsies during the period when the families were moved from the compounds into housing during the 1950 -1970's. From the start I wanted to ensure we were working collaboratively and was keen for the community to voice their ideas for future workshops and what resources they would like me to provide.

Images 6.3 and 6.4 People participated from the beginning

That morning I arrived at the hall as arranged at about 9.30 – there was a small group of six or so people outside the door to the hall, leaning on the railing outside the main entrance - some were smoking and others were just chatting. Having gained experience of working with this community helped in terms of having some idea of what to expect. Had I not met them before, it could have been that they may have seemed an intimidating group both in terms of their appearance and in their communication style.

Upon arriving, I was greeted by waves and shouts from those waiting there. People looked happy and there was some banter going on, as people were laughing and joking. I was pleased that I had seen those who were outside recently, and that they were expecting me. This really helped me to feel relaxed and ready to start the project.

I started by putting the pictures and other resources I had prepared onto a table, and some of the participants came over to see what there was to do. Gradually more and more people arrived.
There was paperwork to complete such as consent forms etc and I would need to ask people what activities they wanted to do. I had everything with me to run the arts and crafts session. On this first morning there were 21 people – excluding myself and the community workers.

Once people had got their drinks and sat down at the tables, I explained the idea of my project and made sure everyone there completed a consent form – this is how I began each session over the coming weeks. This process took about half an hour and Elise helped me collate this information. I noticed that people were looking at the photos and pictures - but I observed that they did not seem interested in the images unless they were something to do with their own culture. I showed them a few, holding them up in front of the table they were all sitting at – but they didn't seem interested really at all. People talked about what was going on in the community – there was a friendly atmosphere with a lot of laughing and joking – especially from Bob who moved around the table talking to people. I had brought some really large (A2) pieces of paper and some of the group had settled down and were drawing using felt tips, pencils and pastels. I also had some small canvasses and acrylic paints, and Jessie and Rose began painting on these.

Elise also spent some of the time talking to people in the kitchen. I noticed that people came to her and Lou with a variety of problems and issues – there were letters to read – mainly of these were official and Elise spent a lot of time on the phone. She said she was dealing with a lot of queries about benefits and the changes in the system to universal credit. She was in great demand and it was clear to me that she provides a lifeline to this community. As most people have no internet at home, and the hall lacked WIFI, Elise had brought an internet dongle which enabled the group to access the internet, which is essential when making benefit claims now.

The group were happy to sit and chat whilst planning some ideas for the next session. They drew up a list of ideas they wanted to do and it was clear that people wanted to make things that they could take home and keep. It was at this session that I met Jack, and he inspired what followed in future weeks.

Meeting Jack
How the pottery sessions came about

After talking about the research project to the whole group, Elise, the community worker called me over to where she was talking to a young man, Jack (aged 26). I recognized him from when he was a child, but he didn't remember me, and I did not know anything about his current circumstances.

Jack said he was more comfortable working on his own and did not want to join in the group discussion. He asked me if I knew various people in the community, and I said that I did – that seemed to relax him a little, as I had noticed that Jack paced around a lot. Although he said he was happy to talk to me, he was reluctant to sit down and preferring to keep moving around. Elsie told me about Jack's talent in pottery and asked him if he had any pictures of the work he had done. After looking, he handed me the phone so that I could scroll through the images. Although Jack did not want to be recorded -- and I wanted to remember the conversation - he suggested that I made notes, which the community worker did on my behalf. This meant that I could pay due attention to his pictures and engage in some rapport with him whilst doing so. We looked at the pictures and Jack talked to me about them, discussing each one in turn. Amongst these images, there was a clay plaque of a Gypsy caravan.

In Jack's plaque, it is interesting to see that yet again, a Gypsy caravan is depicted in the artwork – even more interesting is the fact that Jack is very much younger than the majority of people in the group.

Image 6.5 Jack's plaque.

Having asked Jack why he had chosen to replicate a Gypsy caravan he replied:

Jack: It makes me feel calm ….it makes me feel calm that's all.

I went on to ask him about the horse which I noticed was facing the caravan:

Jack: Cos he is tied up with a ball and chain, but you can't see it cos I painted over it. He has stopped. Patterns – look at the patterns – see – I didn't do a fire – the fire brings people together.

Here, Jack referred to people being together as a positive thing – and yet later in the conversation he added that he liked being on his own, as he didn't trust others.

Jack: I like to keep myself to myself

Jack then showed me the picture of a beautifully constructed memorial cross that he had made for his mother when she had died – it was of exceptional quality, and to my eyes looked professionally made. I was genuinely both overcome and surprised at the quality of the work – which I told him. There was a jug which he had also made for his mother and the photos appeared to have been taken in a garden. I asked him where he had made them.

Image 6.6 Jack's memorial cross

Jack: They helped me at the centre but I did it by myself – look at the jug I wrote her a poem and put it on the jug."
Jane: Where do you do all your artwork?
Jack: I do it at the day centre (he mentioned the name)
Jane: Oh, you go to a day centre?

Once he told me this, I began to understand that Jack has some additional needs. I knew that a placement at this centre can only be accessed through a referral system by Adult Social Services, and that it specializes with adults who experience significant cognitive delay. So, the

idea of a young Gypsy man, one who presented as a someone with some learning needs, writing poetry and creating such beautiful pieces of work was something I had not anticipated at all. This was inspirational and meant that the workshops took on direction that I had not been expecting.

As Wilkie states in relation to reflexive thinking, 'When you don't get the response or reaction you expected from a participant, inappropriate assumptions and preconceived ideas will be brought to light' (Wilkie,2015:2). She goes on to suggest that in reflexive thinking, you use these experiences to reflect on any preconceptions you brought into the interview and remember this as something to keep in mind for following interviews, helping you to avoid this happening again.

Jack said the feelings this image evoked to him, made him 'feel calm' - this is similar to what others (such as Ruth) also said throughout the study. The image that he had created was completely unexpected to me, and again made me realise how important and significant this image – in its many forms – is to the participants, regardless of their age.
Jack's plaque is the only picture to include people, indicating this is a living wagon with a sense of movement and activity, and there is a great deal of detail. Although he has always lived in a house, when asked about travelling Jack replied:

> Jack: I've travelled far more than you my dear. I used to go and see my grandparents but not live in a wagon… I'd like to live in a Vardo though … it's better. It gives you freedom … my dad's going travelling at the moment and …he just goes where he wants.
> He went on say:
> Jack: I've made a Gypsy caravan – a big one. Out of wood. For me dad. I made it at the day centre… I goes there three times a week.

So, this specific conversation with Jack provided a useful starting point and gave me ideas for ways of promoting future inquiry. I then went and discussed the idea with the rest of those present, everyone was in happy agreement that they would like to have a go at pottery. None of them except Jack had any previous experience of working with clay.

What also interested me was the fact that Jack had created traditional models of something relating to the past – a past which he can only have known about through recollections and stories told by his friends and family – and yet he was also embracing the present in terms of using technology to store the images of the things he had made. I was fascinated by the fact that he found the image of the caravan as having a calming effect and I wondered why.

As we were leaving the hall, Elise said quietly:

> 'Jane, can I ask you to think again about the pottery – last time they did anything like this, clay was thrown all around the hall like children and it was a complete nightmare. I'm worried we'll get into trouble with the committee'.

Although I understood her reasons, I was optimistic that we could run the session in an orderly way. It was too late – the seed had been planted and the community thought that was what was happening, and I did not want to let them down. I re - assured her that I would ask my own pottery teacher – an experienced community artist - to come and help, and if she any problems arose, I would discuss alternative ideas with the group. On reflection I was taken aback by Elise's comments and assumptions that the group would not be able to work on the pottery and that they were being compared to children by someone who knew them well.

Nomadism and the symbol of the Vardo

This community place great importance to iconic images and artefacts which pertain to Gypsy culture, such as the Vardo. Despite its iconic importance, the Vardo was actually only commonly used in the United Kingdom for a relatively short period of time (Mayall, 1988). Most of this settled Gypsy community have never experienced travelling, and yet traditions of nomadism, or 'travelling', remain a central tenet of their lives (Phillips, 2017:7).

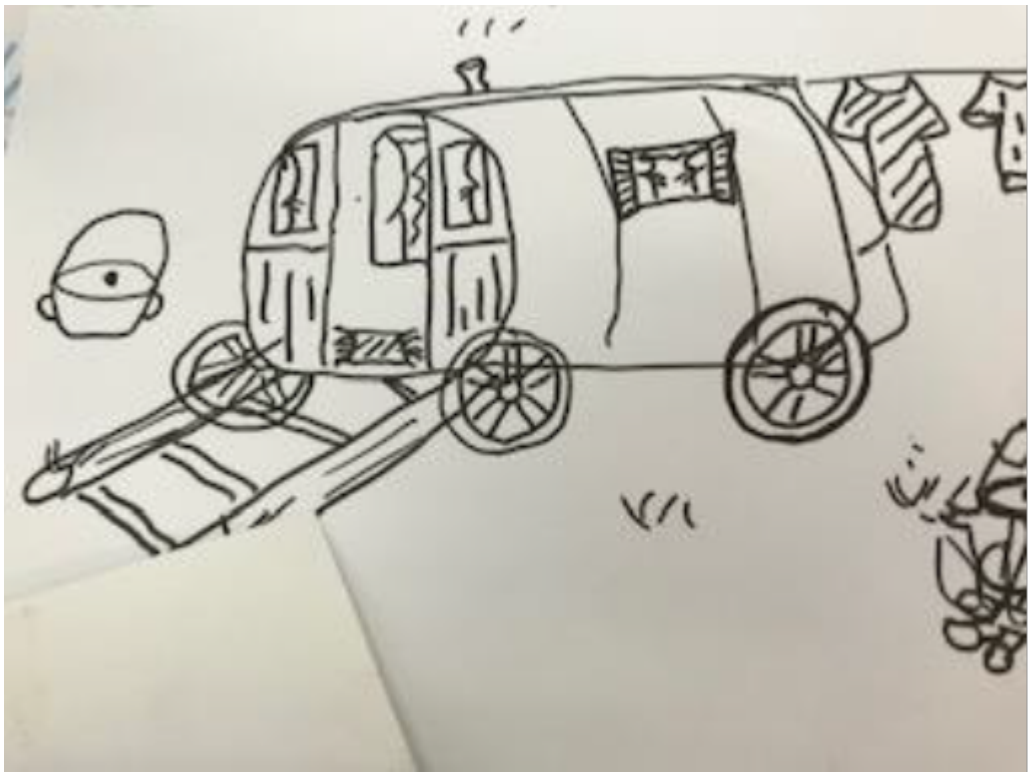
From the beginning of the research project, the romantic image of the Gypsy wagon was created and recreated in a variety of mediums time and time again. The replication of this throughout the study, was unexpected. During the first week, when one of the Gypsy men (Charlie) began drawing a Vardo, this led me to question the reason why someone who had probably never travelled at all, held this image so dear. Charlie said that this image represented his 'Traveller' heritage, as explored later. Referring to the imagery of the Gypsy caravan (as above), even though it transpires from stories told by this community, that most (including Jack) had never travelled in a Vardo, leads me to think that this is to them a constructed symbol of their heritage and oral history. It is interesting to note that this romanticized image is one which is also a symbol of fascination by the wider community, and one which is accepted by the majority as a symbol of 'the true Romany'. I surmised that this was in fact one of the few things they can be proud of which they feel is widely accepted by society.

Had the participants been given a brief, for example of 'producing art for an exhibition of Roma and Traveller art' this might have created expectations on the group to produce these

traditional images. However, the respondents continued to reproduce images of the Vardo in a variety of genres over the course of the project. This demonstrates how significant this icon is for them. The Vardo, created in its different forms, appeared throughout the following weeks on the painting of canvasses, in the clay workshops, (both as a flat image and as a 3 D model) and in the creation of Gypsy wagon trinket boxes.

Images 6.7– 6.10: People worked both in groups and also on their own

Despite the various methods of construction, when individual people were asked what the image depicted to them the same response was given; people said feel a sense of ‘freedom’, whilst Ruth and Jack also said it made them feel ‘calm’. The obvious irony of this is that most of this settled Gypsy community have never experienced travelling, ‘and yet traditions of nomadism, or travelling, remain a central tenet of their culture, identity and heritage’ (Phillips, 2017:7). Through their creations, the group presented their identity through the distant and romanticised memories of travelling. As they are unable to do this now, they can only talk about it now.

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Images 6.11– 6.16: Vardos created in different mediums

Interpreting the meaning in the art-work

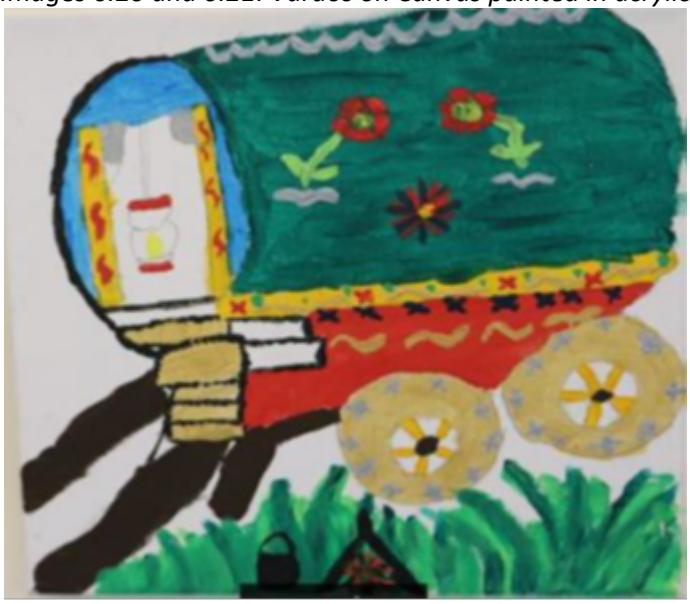
Creating these artefacts and pictures clearly enabled those within the group 'to experience a different era, despite the fact that the work created did not represent their current lives' (Harper, 2002: 14). The aim was for the images of the work to provide a new insight into a different culture, and to gain an understanding of how this community work together and how they express their identity. Through their art, and the discussion which was generated through this, they were able to re-live the experience of travelling as a group and their memories; without the art workshops they would not have this opportunity. The results of their art-work, which depicts many things that the community feel have been stolen from them, reveal the interacting oppression of poverty and culture. They have their culture and their traditions which are held very dear to them, and yet are powerless to facilitate change in their circumstances. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings - the 'giving and taking of meaning' - between the members of a society or group . . . thus culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is around them, and 'making sense' of the world, in broadly similar ways (Hall, 1997a:2, cited by Rose, 2001:6).

Image 6.17: Charlie's Caravan - Coloured pencil drawing

This drawing of a Gypsy wagon in a rural scene was created in coloured pencil, and again, the caravan is placed in the centre of the paper and occupies most of the page. The wagon is green and yellow, the traditional colours of the Vardo, although Charlie's are more pastel rather than bright or dark. This may have been because of the available materials. In this picture, the Vardo is seen by Charlie as a symbol of freedom and a traditional way of life. There are no people in the scene, perhaps because this representation is of a past memory and lifestyle that is no longer possible. When asked why (bearing in mind that he had never travelled at all), he held this image so dear, Charlie replied that this image represented his heritage, a tradition which he still values as part of his identity. He commented 'this is part of my culture' (Charlie).

On looking at the creations, I noticed that there are similarities between the various depictions of the drawings of the Vardos created by participants; for example, the Vardo is generally centred on the page and facing the same direction, whilst the door of the wagon is closed.

Images 6.18 and 6.19: Vardos on Canvas
Images 6.20 and 6.21: Vardos on Canvas painted in acrylic



These four images (14-17) were created by different participants at various sessions during the project. All the images are painted in strong vibrant colours. Most of the wagons are depicted from the same angle, drawing one's eye towards the steps in the foreground; in some depictions the drawings are out of proportion. The fact that the ladders are in a secure stationery position, perhaps indicates that they are ready for someone to enter. These do not include any people or animals. In two of the pictures there are lit fires, buckets and utensils which indicate a living wagon, rather than one which is purely ornamental. There is still this sense of nature, although the Vardo takes up much of the available space, and there is little depiction of the landscape. However, in all of them there is a sense of lack of motion, as the ladder is set up in front of the door, implying that the wagon is stationery as opposed to moving. In the Vardo below (Image18), the artist has added lines, creating the traditional 'lined out' design of a Reading wagon.

Images 6.21 and 6.22: Vardos on Canvas – painted in acrylic

These pastoral scenes depict an idyllic country landscape, with a bright blue sky in each of the paintings, and sun and clouds in two; the images represent their love of nature and an outdoor way of life. In the top left painting, the row of flowers is quite naïve and child-like in execution, but also shows a significant awareness of colour and pattern. The borders are painstakingly drawn, and to me are reminiscent of embroidered borders on Indian textiles. There is an idyllic sub text to the images, but the absence of any human figures gives the wagons an air of detachment. They seem as if they are not functioning homes and there is a sense of loneliness in the way that the Vardos are portrayed, with no sense of movement or mobility, so they are neither sedentary or mobile.

Image 6.23: Vardo with landscape

Image 6.24: Vardo and horse

These images above show two Vardos in which the wagon forms part of a larger scene. Image 20 and 21, the creators are expressing their identity through the creation of a whole scene, which appears to represent their love of nature and an outdoor way of life which they talked about frequently. These pastoral scenes depict an idyllic country landscape, with a bright blue sky in each of the paintings and sun and clouds in two of the canvasses. In the top left painting, the row of flowers is quite child-like in execution, but also shows a significant awareness of colour and pattern. They are painstakingly drawn. There

is an idyllic sub text to the images, but the lack of any human figures gives the wagons an air of detachment.

Jack, who was a younger participant, worked mostly on his own at a separate table. However, he created images which were like the others in design and composition. When asked why he had created the image of a Gypsy caravan, he replied:

Jack: It makes me feel calm ….it makes me feel calm that's all

In reviewing the image of the Vardo, it is important to question if this is a socially constructed romanticized image, which the group have reproduced because it helps them to feel accepted by the Gaudje majority. People readily involved themselves in discussion about why the Vardo as so important to them.

Images 6.25 and 6.26: the Vardo as a symbol

Eileen:	To me, the Vardo is a symbol of freedom – from the days when we were able to move around and were able to live off the land…in the past we could stop where we wanted and common land as easier to get onto.
Nancy:	Yes, to me it means freedom and being able to move around from place to place.
Eileen:	It's our culture and used to be our way of life …the Vardo is a symbol of the old days and how we used to live. We could look after ourselves in those days … we were independent and self-sufficient and people treated us well, the farmers would welcome us because we were useful to them. Now there is no work for us on the farms.

Table 6.1 – symbol of the Vardo

Image 6.27, 6.28 and 6.29: Trinket Boxes

The group had suggested making and decorating trinket boxes, and I followed this up by buying papier mâché treasure boxes which they then decorated with pieces of material and various art and craft findings. As with all of their creations, the group wanted to make something they could keep and again the Vardo was chosen as the subject by most of those participating.


Images 6.30 and 6.31: making the trinket boxes

Over the course of a few weeks, both women and men in the group constructed the models using decorations such as lace (which in the past was an important ingredient among the items they used to sell) to finish them off. All the boxes have flowers and depict scenes of nature, such as the bird's nest and the deer buttons. Participants did not use traditional colours in their creation.

Working with Clay

The group asked if they could make items out of clay, and I knew I could engage the help of a community artist/potter to work with us. As the idea had been suggested by the group themselves, I wanted to respect this request. For the next 4 weeks the participants made a variety of artefacts out of clay, starting with wall plaques.

The community artist suggested that for people to become familiar with the material, that they should roll out the clay and work on this by creating a one-dimensional picture. They were enthusiastic and began making a variety of pictures, with some choosing to recreate the Vardo.

Jack then showed us some images on his phone, of other creations of Gypsy wagons that he had made at home. Jack had clearly already, in his own environment, created traditional models of something relating to the past; yet he was also embracing the present in terms of using technology to store the images of the things he had made on his phone. It was evident from this that for even younger members of the group, that this symbol of Gypsy heritage is significant to their sense of identity.

Figure 6.29 and 6.30 (below) illustrates the clay plaque that Ruth made. It is like the painted Vardos, with washing depicted in the picture, and the addition of the cooking pot and the fire, intimates that there is some sign of camp life here.

Images 6.32 – 6.33: clay plaques

The artwork created inspired some interesting and poignant discussions, evidencing that it is not just the finished art work which is important but the process of 'doing'.

Images above and below 6.34 - 6.36: Creating their door Plaques

Some people chose to make door plaques, detailing their house names or house numbers. The inhabitants are proud to declare their heritage openly, and in addition that they want to adorn their homes with their own creations. These symbols would be clearly be seen by anyone visiting or passing by the house, being immediately visible to anyone outside. The plaques are making a statement, a public expression of how the inhabitants in the house portray their heritage and their pride in their identity. Despite government policy having forced their sedentary status, they made decorations for their homes, although they were homes that they and their ancestors had been housed in without choice or consultation; in making items for their homes there is a sense of integrating the past with the present. Their homes are symbols of belonging, and their own private space, a space they wanted to claim for their own. They wanted to decorate their home with cultural markers (Levine and Levine, 2011).

Their overall experience of the cultural transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a sedentary one is expressed in their artwork (Huss, 2008 and Perez, 2001, cited by Levine and Levine, 2011).

Images 6.37 and 6.38:Clay Vardo from start to finish

Image 6.39: Charlie's Vardo

As the weeks progressed, some of the group wanted to experiment with making more challenging artefacts. The wagons were created over the course of a few weeks. Ruth and Charlie were both making a bow top wagon, and although they were sitting at separate tables, their work was very similar. The Vardo was complicated to construct, and they both

concentrated hard whilst engaged in the making. As she was focusing on moulding the clay into shape, everyone in the group came to admire Ruth's work.

It was Ruth's creation (Image 6.34) which inspired some further ideas:

Bob:	We could make a clay pot…to go around the Vardo.
Rose:	Oh yes, that's what we could do …. we could make a kettle …. we could make the kettle grate and then the fire.
Ruth:	Yes, to go in the centre of the picture cos that is the centre of the community – the fire. That's where all the talking takes place …. where all the washing gets done …everyone sits around the fire.
Nancy:	Shall we do two bare knuckle fighters as well, shall we?

Table 6.2 – working together

The idea of creating a scene together, inspired the others who were at Ruth's table, and they then also started making items to go around the caravan. They began creating a scene to complement the Vardo, making items and artefacts that relate to travelling; for example: a kettle stick, an iron pot, and a model of a fire. Sammy helped Nancy to construct a little dog and Bob went around the tables helping people to make various things, such as a bird, a skillet and a kettle. They were animated as they made suggestions to each other about what they could make and discussed what would go where.

Image 6.40: the creation of the clay objects provided a positive way of the community working together and exchanging stories and ideas.

The group spent a long time making their designs and again, they said they were making symbols which represent their traditions of travelling and being close to nature, which they saw as their 'place' (Relph, 1976:63, cited by Spencer, 2011).

With the whole group contributing to the scene, making things to go with the model, they were working on the task collaboratively as a group (Gray, de Boehm et al 2010). 'It appeared that their reaction and willingness to collaborate increased their sense of belonging to the group' (Spencer, 2011:69).

Images 6.41 and 6.42: Additional objects to complement Ruth's Vardo

Images 6.43 and 6.44
Collection of glazed clay artefacts depicting Gypsy culture

Images 6.45: above Ruth painting
and 6.46 & 6.47: Clay horse

Conversations about Travelling

This extract is from a workshop where the participants were engaged in decorating their clay objects. There was really calm atmosphere today – some people were painting their clay door plaques and others had made 3D Gypsy caravans - and these, together with other images related to travelling inspired a great deal of conversation about travelling over the following weeks. There was positive atmosphere throughout the session; there were times when there was a real sense of calm and … a sense of happiness, and this was one of those times.
Rather than just letting the conversation flow, I really wanted to get to know how the group felt about travelling and to understand if they have a realistic view of what it would actually be like to travel in the 21st century. I had brought some old black and white photographs of a Vardo and a family sitting around the steps. One of these I had copied onto an A2 piece of paper which I'd had laminated. I asked the group 'What do you think life was really like for this family?' I wanted them to think about the realities of managing life on a day to day basis.
I had a large poster which depicts the dates of anti Gypsy legislation over the last five centuries, and I put this up on the wall at the end of the hall. In front of the poster I had set out a table with a poster of a picture of a country road and a wooden Vardo and a china cob - horse. This is something I use as an exercise in my teaching, and I hoped it would inspire conversation and discussion.

Image 6.47: poster depicting legislation

Questions included:

What do you think life was like for this family?
- Living conditions
- Making a living
- Other people's perceptions

Why do you think they lived a Traveller's life?
In what ways do you think this lifestyle has changed over the years to the present day and why?

Image 6.48: poster -what was life like for this family

It was interesting to discuss this with the very people to whom this is so relevant. Despite the fact that the group acknowledged the reality of the extremely hard way of life, the group – even the younger ones – unanimously preferred the idea of travelling as opposed to living in a house. The conversation was informal and the style of my questioning, as was generally throughout the interviews, was chatty and informal. They felt that it was still possible to live like this – we talked about the fact that keeping food and cleaning clothes would be more of a challenge but the group were adamant that they would manage. They did acknowledge that the opportunity to live off the land would be much more difficult these days – there were less farms than before and there was a general feeling that you couldn't trust people as much as you could in the old days. There are less stopping places too – the view was that the police would be the worst people in authority, and they would move you on;

Ruth: The gavvers would move you on before you even got there
Nancy: It's true … the kids get stopped all the time for just driving their car
Ruth: They're on our case all the time

Table 6.3 – Aspects of travelling

As the discussion went on, it was clear that people felt skilled enough to survive. They felt they could live by coursing and by fishing, although there was some agreement that this would be

better in the summer months. Nancy and Lottie agreed that the ideal arrangement would be to live on a site for the winter months and to go off travelling in the summer – like she had done as a child. The group agreed that this would be ideal – it's how they would like to live.

I asked the group about how they teach their children about the Travelling way of life.

Jessie: In the summer we and the kids go out into the old compounds and camp out. We stay for a couple of nights and cook food on the fire. We all go and collect wood. I've got a cast iron crate specially to put on the fire. The kids love it … and I always make a stew … some joey grey or something so that they can eat traditional food cooked on an open fire.

Nancy: Yes, we've done this a few times haven't we? We have to be careful where we camp and we make sure it's not for too long so people don't moan. The children love it. We toast marshmallows and boil up a kettle on the fire for hot chocolate.
We sit and talk and sometimes tell stories. And we make sure there's no mess left behind.

Jessie: We have a fire outside in our garden most Friday evenings, especially in the winter … and we invite our friends and family to come sit around the fire … we always have marshmallows to toast on the yog (fire) too.

Nancy: I am lucky where I live as I can do this as we have a large back garden, and we're not overlooked.

Charlie: Yes, you are lucky …we can't do this where we live. My granfer and grannie were evicted from their house for lighting fires and cooking in their garden.

Table 6.4 – maintaining traditions

Note here yet again is reference to the fear people have of losing their homes.

We then talked about whether it was still possible to live off the land and be self-sufficient. People felt, even the younger ones, that they still had skills in things like coursing and fishing. When they started talking about vegetable picking, this then led to a conversation about politics. Nancy felt their jobs had been taken away by European immigrants:

Nancy: When they were talking about Brexit and how they send them all back (meaning the Polish) they were saying, what we going to do without any foreigners, they won't have anyone working in the fields. I wanted to say well perhaps the Gypsies could come back

Rose: The trouble is now, if you think about the cost of living, how much your rent is, you'd have to do an awful lot of hours in that field to pay for everything wouldn't you?

Nancy: Yes, you would. Trouble is that some people on benefits are better off than if they were working

Table 6.5 - economics of travelling

Image 6.49: Eileen looking at photos of the compounds

Making horses

Some of the group had previously said they wanted to make clay models of horses and although these would be very difficult to construct, the community artist had agreed that we would 'have a go'. She had brought with her the rods and other tools to enable these to be built. She gave each person a lump of clay to knead, and seven of the group decided they wanted to make the horses, whilst the others finished painting their designs or plates which had already been fired. People soon settled down and were focused on their work, whilst chatting. This workshop gave the group an opportunity to discuss some of the cultural traditions that they are no longer able to celebrate.

The horses which were created were based on the Gypsy Cob, a sturdy working horse as described in Chapter 3 (Hallas-Kilcoyne, 2013).

Images 6.50 and 6.51: modelling identity - constructing the clay horses

Images 6.52 and 6.53: Gypsy cob horses

There was a high level of interest and concentration in the making of the horses, which was an intricate and delicate process. They took a long time to build, and people sat for hours making them. Although there were some images of horses to use as a reference point, as the session progressed, I observed that people did not refer to these, but worked from their own imagination.

The clay activity inspired a conversation about their regret about no longer being able to keep horses. Despite this, the horse still remains an important and key element of Gypsy cultural heritage. Sammy said that living long term benefits meant they would not have enough money to look after a horse:

Sammy: Because I live on benefits, there's not enough money for me to keep a horse but I'd love one.

Jessie: Yes, I would love to keep a horse …I want my children to be able to ride, but I can't afford it and we've nowhere to keep one. We can't afford the costs of keeping one.

Rose:	It's OK if you live on a site… the Gypsies there are allowed to and camp out in the good weather.
Nancy:	Until last year, our cousin Jimmy used to come here and bring his wagon and horses. with him …. he can't do it anymore as the council stopped him.
Rose:	Yes, they would camp up in the old compounds. The parish council were very good, making spaces for them to stop and allowing them to stay for a few weeks in the summer holidays.
Nancy:	Oh yes …. we camped on the site of old compounds. The kids all learn to ride there … and it was a good way of showing them the traditions and what is was really like for our grandparents to travel. We always made sure there was no rubbish and cleared everything up when we left.
Rose:	They were great days and the kids still talk about them …but we still go to the compounds and camp out in the good weather.

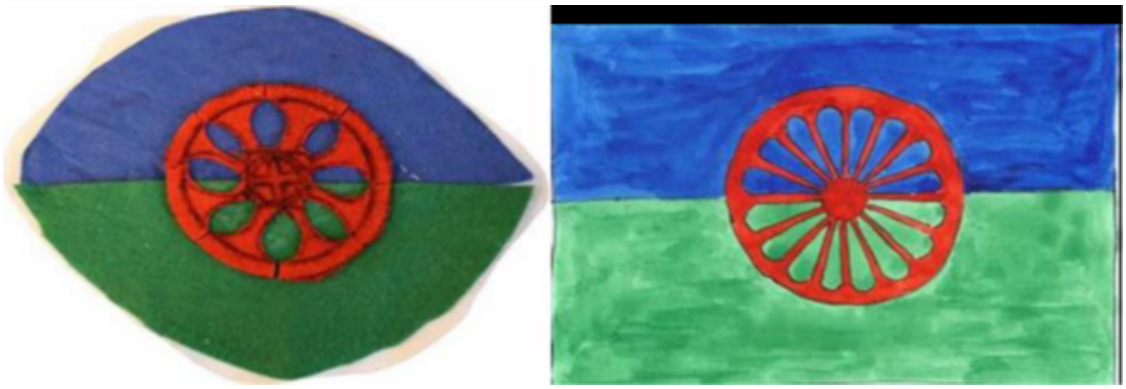
Table 6.6 – passing on the traditions to future generations

Keeping a horse

Living in rural isolation and being in poverty, with no transport, clearly undermines the ability of the group to follow their traditional practices. The fact that they live in local authority housing is restricting, as illustrated by Charlie's comments (Bennett,2012). In addition, living on long term benefits does not provide enough finance to look after a horse, something respondents felt a sense of regret about:

Image 6.54: Other members of the group chose to depict the horse in paintings on canvasses

Making Flags - The Symbol of the Roma Flag



Images 6.55 and 6.56 – Nancy and Betsy's Roma flag designs

One week, Nancy brought a large Roma flag to the session. I was surprised that she had one of these. I was impressed that although the group said they do not belong to any National Gypsy/Traveller organizations, they all referred to their interpretations of the cultural symbolization of the Roma flag (Spencer, 2011).

The colours used in the Roma flag represent the values of that group (Spencer, 2011). Nancy explained what the flag symbolizes to her:

> The blue at the top of the flag represents heaven … and the green below is the earth. the red spoked wheel in the centre represents movement…travelling … and it means constant movement (Nancy).

Nancy and Betsy created their own versions, one in fabric for the wall hanging and the other painted on canvas (images 6.48 and 6.49).

There is a long history of Romani flags. For instance, the red banner carried by Turkish Romanies, organized as an symbol of the Ottoman Empire (Marushiakova and Popov, 2017:12). However there is ongoing controversy (contradictorily) about the flag's Eurocentrism (it's construction has been largely a European pursuit (see for instance Whitney Smith, 2007), and it's Indian symbolism; it's design being largely attributed to Weer Rajendra Rishi (Dumas, 2015: 535) who promoted the inclusion of the Ashoka Chakra wheel at the centre of the flag - as used in the flag of India (Kenrick, 2007: 89)

Silverman (2011: 48) argues that the bicolor and the Romani anthem are modelled on the 'dominant European tropes of defining the heritage of a singular nation.' But the flag has also been criticised for being essentialist in relation to a complex identity. Kergel (2011:147-148)

sees the WRC flag as threatening to define Roma as ‘a nation without land and assimilate them into a concept of the national state’, stating that it is the Eurocentric vision which neglects that the Roma are in reality "heterogeneous".

By some, the flag can be understood as something of an irrelevance. In the late 70s, ethnographer Zsolt Csalog argued that the creation of the flag was effectively hiding pressing issues while doing nothing to resolve them (Csalog and Vekerdi, 1977:33-34). In 2009, Nirenberg criticized the International Romani Union for concerning itself in the main with promoting the flag and other symbols of Romani nationalism, rather than ‘developing concrete plans for addressing discrimination or poverty ‘ (Nirenberg, 2009, cited by Kenrick, 2017:95).

The flag consists of a background of blue and green, representing the heavens and earth, respectively; it also contains a 16 spoke red Hindu chakra in the centre. In this description, Nancy is referring to the symbol of a nomadic image, derived from ‘narrative folklore’ (Canals, 2017). For Kenrick, ‘The green symbolizes the colour of grass in the fields, fertility, and eternal terrestrial values. The blue represents the sky and eternal spiritual values (Kenrick, 2007: 91). The chakra in the centre resembles a red wheel with 16 spokes and was added to represent the Indian origin of the Roma and to symbolise the wheel and constant movement - a description which is highly contested by Belton 2004, 2005) According to the congress, the wheel is identical with the ‘ashoka’ symbol on the Indian flag (Kenrick, 2007: 90). The colour red of the Chakra is said to represent the ‘blood’ that many Roma shed during the Second World War and during the Porajmos, serving as a reminder of the tragic events in the history of the Roma people. The design that is depicted on Nancy’s flag was approved by representatives of several self-identifying Romani communities at the first World Romani Congress held 1971.
‘It serves to also remind the Roma of their Indian origin this has come to represent meaning to all Gypsy/Traveller/Roma groups’ *(ibid.)*. and it is the official emblem of the Roma.

However, although the Romani flag or flag of the Roma is positioned as the international flag of the Romani people, Belton believes it did not arise from ‘the people’ and ‘the people’ have never really been consulted. Belton argues (2004 and 2005) that the flag was invented and ‘approved’ by the self-appointed representatives of range Romani communities (by no means all) at the first World Romani Congress WRC), convened in Orpington in 1971. Although the 16-spoke red chakra, or cartwheel, is not at all typical of all Gypsy vans it might be taken to be reminiscent of the itinerant tradition, but is effectively an homage to the flag of India and speculated ‘Indian origins’ (Belton, 2005).

Although the group were interested in talking about the flag, they weren't interested in the politics related to the symbol. They were more interested in planning how to make their own:

Charlie: I saw a flag making kit in a shop the other day … we could get some
Nancy: Yes that's a great idea
Ruth: We could decorate them with our own designs

Table 6.7 – flag making

Charlie said it would be a good idea to have something to represent the group to be displayed at the exhibition. In that way they would make it their own and would be a good way of advertising the event. I followed Charlie's advice and thought some kits for the group. It was interesting to note that Chris asked if he could take his undecorated flag home and whilst at the group did not decorate it or show any interest in doing so. I wondered why this was the case.

The fabric was not easy to work with, however the women persevered and there was a small group who collaborated on this task. At first it was the symbol of the Roma flag was independently re-produced by some of the group, and others then went on to design and create their own versions. The group created visual representations of things that to them, represent their Gypsy culture the Vardo is again seen the
subject of two flags; there is a horseshoe on another; whilst others depict scenes from nature. In one other there are trees, a fire and a horse (photo top left) and in another, flowers. Ruth completed the drawing of the Vardo which the others then decorated.

The group have used the original idea of the flag and have gone on to make it their own, which in itself is an important political point. Taking a nationalistic trope, they have turned it into something that for them represents both personal and group solidarity. In so doing they have shifted the discourse that produced the flag (dreams, ambitions, fantasies about nationality, race and so on. These flags have their own narrative and community meaning through their more humane imagery.

The women created visual representations of things that to them represents their Gypsy Culture, and the Vardo is again the subject of two flags; there is a horseshoe on another; whilst others depict scenes from nature. In one other there are trees, a fire and a horse (photo top left) and in another, flowers. Ruth completed the drawing of the Vardo which the others then decorated.

Images 6.57 and 6.58: planning the flag design

Images 6.59 and 6.60 above and 6.61 below: the group collaborated in working together in decorating the flags for Gypsy Roma Traveller month

Images 6.62 - 6.63: decorated flags

Image 6.64 - a flag advertised the event

Traditional calling apron

Half way through the project, Eileen expressed the idea of making some 'calling aprons', and due to the fact that making them from scratch would have been too complicated, I had bought some white cotton aprons to be decorated. Eileen corrected me saying that the hawking aprons they wore were black so I went onto to get what she wanted. Eileen explained that the white aprons would be worn during the day when doing housework and cooking. Eileen confirmed what Okely (1983:209) had also found: 'When out calling, the women would wear a hawking apron, but this never to be used for food preparation for fear of pollution), usually made from black material and decorated with colourful flowers'.

Eileen: In the old days we used to wear aprons…Joddakai we call them. We had to wear them every day…my Mum and Nan would never go out without their aprons on…in fact they wore them all the time, even in the home. But in the home, they would wear white ones, long enough to cover themselves.

Nancy: I never wore one but I remember my grannie's … it was black with bright flowers on
Mine had pockets on the front for calling – you could keep all your bits and bobs in them even money. I had one as a young girl and we were made to wear them when I was young, but no one wears them like that now.

Patricia: My mum wore one. There were everyday aprons and special ones for going out … say flower selling or going to the market.

Eileen: Yes, there were special ones for going out. You had your hawking apron -my mum wore one. There were everyday aprons and special ones for going out … say flower selling or going to the market. *(See Chapter11, Okley)*

Table 6.8 -aprons

Images 6.65 and 6.66: traditional aprons

Images 6.67 and 6.68: traditional aprons

Some of the group depicted the familiar traditional images in the aprons, whereas others chose to make the apron colourful, decorating them with flowers. Making the aprons led to some discussion about how people had earnt their living in the past. Although older members

spoke of their sense of pride in their own parents, it was evident that this especially applied to the female family members.

Image 6.69: white apron

Some of the group said they were proud that their mothers were able to 'turn their hand to anything;' Eileen and Len added that their mothers would make things to sell, such as reed mats, flowers pegs and wooden baskets; but they also worked on the farm, doing hard physical work to support and look after their family as found by Okely, 1983. Len, added that his mother was a 'very clever woman', saying that he regretted that he hadn't taken more notice of the crafts his mother had made when he was little, as he could have then learnt to do them for himself.

The comments about gender identity are interesting; it is clear from their narrative that in the past the roles that female members of the family played were crucial to many aspects of Gypsy life, from sharing traditions and cultural values to supporting (and in some cases providing) the Gypsy economy for their families.

The home is seen as the principle area of socialization for men and women and it is here that they learn their respective gender roles within the community, where the women are socialized for domesticity and where, from childhood, girls learn to equate their femaleness with domesticity (Oakley, 1974:113). Eileen said she was aware of the gendered aspects of the apron, but that this is no longer practiced. She was aware of the reasons why women originally wore white aprons around the home, but this was no longer adhered to in her community:

> ‘Once we moved into houses a lot of things changed. We were all living in a small space indoors so men and women had to share the home and all the washing facilities like the bathroom and toilet. People weren’t going out for work so they were around the home and inside more than before. The old habits like women not being able to walk in front of a man have gone. Women would wear aprons to do the housework and protect food they were making …but some people don’t even know that the aprons were there to hide the women’s body. I wore mine to stop my clothes getting dirty and to keep the food clean, not to hide my body. With modern day living, I don’t know any people that do this now. I still practice some things …. like I would never wash my clothes in the washing up bowl but I’m sure some others would. We are all very particular about food and won’t eat anything that has been prepared by someone we don’t know. These old-fashioned traditions are on the way out …they were in my Grandma’s day, no mine.’ (Eileen).

Constructing the Wall hanging

Nancy had suggested making a wall-hanging, to be made up of images which the community would produce, and I enlisted the help of a colleague (Helen) who has experience in this. Over the course of the workshops, Helen had cut and prepared pieces of white fabric, cut into smaller rectangles and people had drawn, sewn and painted on their own designs. Once the group had seen how the wall hanging could be laid out, some suggested some fresh ideas to complete the work, becoming much more enthusiastic whilst working together. They enthusiastically exchanged ideas, creating some of the designs as a group. People collaborated in giving their opinion on what should go where and what else was needed to complete the wall hanging. Everybody except Charlie, participated in one way or another.

The images created represented aspects of cultural traditions, such as the Vardo, horses, nature and animals, and a family travelling – and unlike the other pictures which they created, the work featured people

Image 6.70 and 6.71: sections of the wall hanging

Ruth made me this peacock!

Images 6.72 - 6.73: sections of the wall hanging featuring people travelling

Gender roles

Although it has been identified by many researchers that men from the Gypsy community are reluctant to participate in working with professionals (Matthews, 2012; Parry et al, 2007; Rogers, 2016). it was noticeable that a core group of men were regular attendees at the workshops and were actively involved in making a range of creative works. There was no difference in ways in which they participated – they were just as interested in making the trinket

boxes. Although Charlie voiced a few ideas, it was generally the women who made suggestions of things that they wanted to do in future weeks, including how they wanted the refreshments to be prepared, what food they wanted and places where the workshops could be held when the main hall was unavailable. The women also took an active role in circulating publicity about the workshops and future dates.

The men sat in groups with both other men and also women so there was no gender divide in where they worked.

Images 6.74 and 6.75: a number of males were regular participants

Concentration and focus

The group clearly felt proud of their achievements and there was a high level of discussion inspired by the artwork. The process of making the items initiated much self-reflection among group members.

The group were selective in choosing the activities in which to participate. For example, Nancy had been approached by a folk musician (Judith from Hampshire Music Service) to visit the workshops and give people the opportunity to participate in some traditional activities. Judith brought some jigging dolls to one of the workshops to demonstrate the folk tradition of step dancing. After talking to the group for a while, Judith gave a demonstration of step dancing with the jigging dolls, while the participants watched; although they were happy to watch the demonstration, they were not enthusiastic to have a go themselves; eventually, Ruth volunteered and managed the task well. eventually, Step dancing was something that the older members of the group recalled as an activity which they had enjoyed in the past. However, they had not seemed interested in participating in this during the workshops.

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The process of making the items initiated much self-reflection among group members.

Images 6.76 – 6.79: Jigging dolls

Reflecting on the art, I feel that I had assumed that the group were limited in some way and was therefore surprised by the quality of their work; I needed to be mindful of this as the workshops progressed. The apparent levels of dependency of some participants had created an image of a group of people who were incapable in some way and I had, in some ways, stereotyped the group, contrary to anti-discriminatory practice (Thompson, 2001:29). Inappropriate assumptions and preconceived ideas can emerge when the information received is not what may have been expected (Wilkie, 2015:2). By participating in the art workshops, participants gained new creative skills, their confidence increased; the opportunity to engage in the task together, increased a sense of belonging to the group and their memories. The creation and re-creation of traditional symbols enabled them to sustain and defend their sense of Gypsy identity (Betts, 2015).

Image 6.79: the wall hanging

The exhibition – celebrating Gypsy Roma Traveller Month

Early on in the project, the community asked if they would be able to display their art work somewhere. Although this was unexpected, it was important to enable the group to fulfil their wishes. The arts development worker from the local arts centre visited one of the workshops, and a community event and exhibition was arranged to be held in the arts centre. It was agreed that this would be held in June, to celebrate Gypsy Roma and Traveller month. The development of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month(GRTHM), a Department for Children, Schools and Families supported initiative which began in 2007, has paid dividends in terms of community cohesion and enhanced understanding of the culture, music and practices of travelling people (Greenfields and Ryder, 2010:106). We planned a wide range of activities from an oral history workshop, to step-dancing, peg-making, traditional song workshops with flower-wreath weaving, and in this way, the activities which are internally practiced and valued by Gypsies and Travellers (and often passed down from elders to young people) could be shared with mainstream communities (Greenfields and Ryder, 2010:107). The aim was to

facilitate a sense of cultural pride in the group and to raise awareness of the local Gypsy community history and for them to share their skills they have to share with others in mainstream society. Together with the artefacts created at the workshops, the aim was to display historical photographs of Travellers camping in local areas, alongside oral history accounts of travelling and working in the locality.

Once the date had been set, we agreed that we needed to produce some additional items for the display at the arts centre. It was a priority that the exhibition was inclusive and that it reflected the true aims of the project. It was the community's idea to promote the local Gypsy community and to raise awareness of positive aspects of their ethnicity, and to challenge discrimination. Most of the participants were eager to be involved in the preparation of artefacts for the exhibition. The group seemed much more interested in running the community workshops. Through this I learnt that the exhibition itself and the opening event may be more likely to be of interest to other local residents, rather than the group themselves.

Having seen the publicity designed and circulated by the Centre, I decided to create a more inclusive flyer to circulate around the participants by letterbox and also through social media networks. The aim would be to try and encourage people from the Gypsy community to come and see their work and the displays which depict their heritage. It was important that the exhibition was not seen as an event which would exclude the artists themselves. The arts centre is not somewhere that the community would normally frequent, so it was important that they felt that this was arranged with as much of their input as possible and not just by myself. There were offers of help from some people to run some workshop demonstrations such as flower making, painting and model making. Transport for the participants was arranged.

Opening event

In addition to the displays, the arts centre manager had arranged to have some information from an oral history project (The Living Album) conducted by the local authority (and funded by the local heritage fund) in 2011, comprising of display boards, photographs and a video depicting the lives of Gypsies in Hampshire. People were keen to make things to display, although there were aspects of the events that did not seem to be of interest to them – for example, attending 'The Hither side of the Hedge' which was a presentation of the work of the late Alice Gillington and Amelia Goddard, both of whom were local artists who lived in the community during the early 1920's. The latter had spent much of her life

in the village from the late 1930's, where she initially lived with her brother in a bow top wagon. The local Gypsy families were the subjects of many of her paintings.

Images 6.80: the exhibition

The exhibition of the work of the group was set up in the main room next to the theatre. Participants came and went to look at the different exhibition stands looking at the things they had made but not seen for a few weeks. The group seemed pleased with the way the exhibition had been arranged. However, it was their own work which captured their attention in the main.

On the weekend of the opening event, the community workshops were held at the centre. It had been agreed that Ruth would run a flower making workshops, her own suggestion. Others would help with painting canvases and planting seeds. Charlie wanted to decorate horseshoes.

Images 6.81 – 6.82: the workshops

Images 6.83 and 6.85: Workshops

Images 6.86 – 6.87: paper flower making workshops

Image 6.88 Ruth and Nancy were relaxed and happy to share their traditional flower making skills with the general community

None of the group had been to the centre before, despite the fact that it is situated only 5 miles away from where they live. This evidences that the Arts centre's target audience leans more towards the middle-class section of the population.

In addition to the participants who came to help, the workshops were attended by over 60 people from the local community, only a few of whom ascribed to Gypsy heritage. The flower making workshop was by far the most popular activity with visitors. It was Ruth who mainly facilitated this activity throughout the day as people came to join in, and Nancy came to help when the session became busy. Ruth and Nancy explained to their audience that making paper flowers was a traditional craft that Gypsy women would engage in, and the finished items would be sold door to door. They explained that in those days, fresh flowers were only available in the spring and summer months, and artificial flowers were not widely available; these paper flowers would be the only source in the winter months, so they were popular forms of decoration.

During the exhibition whilst at the community workshops (despite having previously shown little interest in the Jigging dolls or the step dancing), a number of the community participated in the classes provided by the Hampshire Music Service. Participation was across all the ages, and it was significant that younger members were able to learn this traditional dance.

Images 6.89 and 6.90:
members of the community learning to Step dance

Images 6.91 - 6.92: handmade goods to sell

Image 6.93: participants went on to make items to sell independently

The art workshops had also inspired some entrepreneurial activity in the community; people had independently made some items to sell at Christmas time, and they proudly brought them to the last session to show us all. Jim had made some holly wreaths which he had been selling in the village, whilst Ruth had made some table decorations using a recycled artificial Christmas tree and baubles. Jessie had also made reindeer from found objects such as tree branches and logs.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to work alongside the participants and to provide them with the opportunity to express their feelings about their own cultural identity through creativity.

Those who are being researched, often exist within a complex web of systemic oppression and are often studied within a research context that is heavily impacted upon by the politics and ethics surrounding research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2007). Creativity enabled me to prompt participants' narratives that best described the lived experience of the community which is relevant to their lives. Qualitative visual methods provided me as the researcher, with a tool with which to address the power imbalance.

As has been argued in recent years, the research environment is, more-often- than-not, compounded by the biologically situated researcher' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:23), who works from a position of privilege imposing the perspectives of her 'own historical research tradition' on the 'Other'. Liebenberg questions how we as researchers are able to produce richer data based on more valid accounts of human lives; so how do we improve the connection between

ourselves as privileged and those with whom we interact in the field who are so-often marginalized? (Liebenberg, 2009:334). Pink (2001) asserts that ethical use of visual methods requires researchers to engage in a collaborative process with participants.

The use of creative explorations within the research process, and as part of a larger narrative process, inspired a new collaboration between participants and me as a researcher. The images of the work serve as a visual tool for the analysis. This study, which incorporated the creation of artifacts made by the study group, provided important information regarding the cultural reality of the community.

The research participants actively constructed their reality through the use of creativity during research process. Experiences and meanings became more tangible through their visual representations, which increased my understanding of how they express their identity. This method allowed for then to express themselves in ways that other forms of communication may not necessarily have allowed. Participants were better able to articulate their experiences during the discussion groups whilst they were creating their work, which stimulated discussion.

In this way, their creations facilitated their articulation of their lived realities in a manner that brought a focus to the research results, which were better aligned with their lives (Liebenberg, 2009).
Reflecting on the images of their work provided me with reminders of the individual workshops and the groups working as well as enabling me to interpret the visual data generated. Discussing the work created by participants situated them as authorities on their lives, better controlling the research content (Liebenberg, 2009).

Through use of visual material, I discovered components of this community's lives that may have been easily overlooked; for example, their ability to focus on long term projects, their tenacity, their adaptability and their focus alongside their generosity in sharing their work and their stories. Above all the level of creativity and focus was inspiring.

Although participants were not directly involved in the continued analysis of the data, emergent themes and themes were discussed and checked with participants throughout the project (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Use of images in this manner introduced topics based on the representation participants wished to produce of themselves, directing the additional research focus.

The structure of society has limited the groups' freedom to make decisions on their lifestyle. As with any oppressed and threatened person, this isolated minority group clearly cling onto and share with each other their traditional identity, perhaps a s a form of protection or a way of gaining acceptance from the rest of the world. Although the group do not appear to have a sense of agency, or the willingness to act independently and make their own free choices in terms of lobbying for example, they were instrumental in suggesting and collaborating in arranging the opportunity to share their culture and heritage with others from the wider community. The exhibition event and the findings from the art work demonstrate the group's expression of a strong social and cultural identity, which contributes to their individual sense of ontological security (Giddens, 1991; Betts, 2015).

The artworks which participants produced, are symbols of energy, commitment and achievement, which fostered within them a sense of pride.

In the next chapter, I present my conclusions.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Comparatively little has previously been written about housed Gypsies, especially concerning those who are settled in bricks and mortar in rural areas in the UK. This thesis makes a contribution to the question and understanding of Gypsy identity, in relation to a group of settled Gypsies living in local authority housing in a small village in the South of England. This work utilises the ideas of key writers on identity theory which frames the study and emphasises the relationship between individual and group identity.

Settlement into deprived and residualised areas of social and public housing has been the experience of the majority of Gypsies and Travellers who were relocated (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:200). This study group are unusual in that they were forced into local authority housing in an enclave surrounded by wealthy neighbours, who are living in properties at the higher end of the housing market. As Sibley observes, 'the countryside it seems belongs to the middle class '(1995: 36). The situation of the Gypsies in this study is therefore one of particular marginalisation: with few opportunities for employment they are doubly disadvantaged by poverty and isolation and forced to live in a community with affluent neighbours. This exacerbates both their physical and emotional isolation and exclusion and reduces their opportunities to improve their life chances and those of their children. Their access to services is extremely limited and their enforced exclusion prevents them from gaining their own independence. 'The inability to gain access to social resources is at the hub of exclusion' (Belton, 2005:106).

Local authority housed Gypsy communities often become hidden from services in terms of their Gypsy identity, as they are expected to integrate into mainstream society once they are housed (Greenfields and Clark, 2006). In the geographical area of the study, despite the concerted efforts of the local authority over several generations, attempts to completely assimilate this Gypsy group into mainstream society have been unsuccessful (Powell, 2016). This study evidences the strength and determination of this housed Gypsy community (both on an individual and group basis) to maintain and protect their own cultural identity, despite their marginalisation and the many attempts to integrate them. This small community have adapted to their living conditions and it is argued that they do so in order to 'stay the same' (Sibley, 1986:57).

As Bowers (2007) notes, and as evidenced through this research project, Gypsy-Travellers do not lose
their culture and heritage as soon as they move into housing. The respondents openly discussed their desire to pursue a traditionally nomadic life, despite the fact that none of them

had ever experienced this lifestyle for any length of time. The group were keen to engage in story telling about their early lives, drawing on individual and collective memories of childhood, which have formed their sense of Gypsy identity. The artworks they produced reflected their sense of Gypsy identity through the reproduction of images and artefacts depicting the Vardo, alongside scenes of nature and the horse.

Some members of the group had researched their ancestry and they were confident in presenting and sharing their own perspectives in public arenas. They use the knowledge they have gained of the past, to express their feelings of marginalisation in an articulate and informed manner. The group express their feelings of solidarity to the community of settled Gypsies of which they are members. They maintain closeness with the group and through this express their sense of belonging and group identity. The participants adorn their homes with Gypsy images in various medium, thus making a visual commitment to sustaining their identity.

They also had a good understanding of legislation at a local and National level and reflected on how this has impacted and continues to impact on their ability to lead an authentic Gypsy lifestyle. By sharing this information with their children and others in the community they are sustaining both their own identity, as well as investing a sense of Gypsy identity in future generations. There is a traditional sense of community within the study group; people support one another both within their immediate and extended families, and they share a sense of kinship based on mutual trust and a shared sense of their identity.

In addition, the group ensure that their children gain an opportunity to experience the way of life that their own parents lived, by visiting the compounds, camping out in a Vardo, grooming and riding horses and cooking outdoors when they are able to. When this is not possible, some talked about how occasionally they light a bonfire in their gardens so that they can sit outside and talk of the old days.

The group continue to engage in traditional practices such as the way they celebrate death, they maintain their customs in the preparation of food, in how they raise their children, and their engagement in traditional crafts. Through their choice in making traditional food and ensuring that others in their community know how to make this, they demonstrate their commitment to maintaining their identity. It is clear that their shared history is an essential part of how the group express their identity, through stories, memories and ties to one another that are held very dear to them. They experience persistent stigmatisation and hostility from outside the group, which includes others from the Gypsy community who do not accept them. This reinforces their need to self-segregate and plays a central part in reinforcing

their group identity and sense of a shared culture (Powell, 2016). Their spatial separation (for example ghettoization and educational segregation) supports the maintenance of physical, social and emotional distance (Cretan and Turnock, 2015). In this way the 'self' becomes at the centre, whilst those that are seen as 'other', that 'repository of our fears and anxieties' is relegated to the margin (Rutherford, 1990: 10). In the process of separation, the next stage is the fear of difference which then becomes exclusionary and leads to discrimination. Difference becomes immersed into various exclusionary and discriminatory discourses in what Austin describes as the 'alienating and separating process, and material practices, such as racism, sexism, and class prejudice' (2005:11).

The innovative methodological approach utilising expressive arts encouraged a close and extended engagement between myself and the group, enabling me to gather very rich qualitative data. This meant that I was able to explore the issue of Gypsy identify with those who are housed, to a deeper level than would have been the case had more traditional methods been utilised. The approach also established a warm relationship between myself and the participants that contributed to open and constructive engagement with the interviews that were more traditionally designed and conducted.

The level of agency and reflexivity that this methodological approach achieved is well indicated by the richness and quality of the data that it allowed me to gather (Bagnoli, 2009). These methods effectively put participants in the position of making the research reflect their own identities. Using the art workshops enabled me to both elicit respondents' expression of their identity and support their thinking.

The workshops promoted natural dialogue and people were seen to be more at ease as the weeks progressed. The enthusiastic and highly appreciative quality of the group's involvement indicates their enjoyment of the study in terms of the practical workshops and in sharing their stories, but in addition it evidences how they were empowered through the opportunity to express themselves in a variety of mediums and to be given the opportunity to exhibit their work.

Using expressive arts allowed the investigation of subjectivities in a mutual dialogue on multiple levels, and provides an example of successful and innovative methods which can be used with a variety of other groups. Using a collaborative approach and seeing the group as the experts in their own lives, listening to their opinions and also taking into account their ideas, promotes successful engagement with the group from start to finish. This method provides an example of how to successfully and effectively engage, not only with this group, but other isolated and conventionally described 'hard to reach' communities who may initially

be initially reluctant to do so. The relationships that this activity enabled me to establish with each of these participants shaped the research and the quality of their involvement.

I (like other practitioners) may have seen the group as victims who have limited ability to move on from the past. This study indicates how the group are in fact managing their identity in the way they want to; they are adaptable and have forged a new identity based upon their group membership. They are sustaining their identity by coming together and supporting each other in the way that communities and families did in the past; something that many of us could envy in contemporary society where for a multitude of factors, this is often lacking. Their close bond has enabled them to adapt and manage their identity, which is fluid and adaptable to change.

A primary theme of the study is the strength and determination of the community (both on an individual and group basis), to maintain and protect their own cultural identity despite their marginalisation and the many attempts to integrate them (Okely, 1983; Austin, 2005). This small community have had to adapt to their living conditions, and they have done so in order to 'stay the same' (Sibley, 1986:57), and also to maintain control over how they choose to be known (Woodward,2004). It is clear that their membership of this group has given them a sense of security and emotional significance (Tajfel, 1978: 63).

Approaching the study from my previous experience as a Social Worker was frustrating at times, as I felt had no place, no power and no sense of agency. I felt unable to do anything to solve the problems which cropped up from week to week, some of which I felt needed a professional intervention. I felt 'stuck in the middle' between authority and the community, which left me feeling defensive and angry about the ways in which they were treated. This experience has deepened my professional understanding of the alienating effects on people who feel badly treated; I became more aware of how this perpetuates their isolation and ultimately their access to services due to their reluctance to engage with services as a result of their experiences of discrimination. It was tempting, at times, for me to branch off into other directions and I needed to focus on the positive aspects of the study rather than the injustice which I felt the group were encountering, which I found challenging. Using reflective supervision, I was able to address these distractions and concentrate on the research questions. I developed strategies for this as I gained more experience in working with the group, and it is important that others embarking on similar research with marginalised groups understand, and devise appropriate strategies for managing this professional dilemma so that it does not negatively impact upon the quality of their research outcomes.

There are limitations in the research study; for instance, some members of this community were known to me, and this could have influenced my analysis of the data. However, the credibility achieved by this acquaintance with some of the group was essential for gaining their initial agreement to participate in the research, and the subject matter enabled me to develop new insights into their identity, which was a subject that had not been discussed with them before. There were also many of the group with whom I was not familiar.

Gaining trust is the key element for research among the Gypsy and Traveller community. This requires an understanding of their culture, their history, their difficult relations with the settled community and their very strong desire to retain their distinct culture. The methodology I adopted related to the particular circumstances of my research. My different roles gradually enabled me to become known and seen in the different spaces where dialogue and discourse, virtual as well as real, took place, and enabled 'people in the field to place and locate me within their experience' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:83). Those Gypsies and Travellers in the study group knew that I was undertaking research into education, but I was primarily known as a supporter, someone who would advocate on their behalf, a participant in their struggle.

Although some young people participated in the study, this could be extended through further investigation seeking the views of the younger generation. Preliminary discussions with some indicate high levels of unemployment, substance misuse and an inability to move away to live independently. Some of those interviewed felt that there was little hope for the future generations in terms of gaining employment and finding somewhere to live, and they questioned how Gypsy identity will be sustained in the future. It is clear that younger people bring a new insight into how Gypsy identity could survive, but with different reference and cultural points. Explorations with groups of younger people might offer some useful comparative material.

The stories and experiences shared by this group suggest that gender roles in Gypsy communities are more fluid and nuanced than is generally represented in the literature, and this is worthy of future study.

Aspects of Gypsies' talent for storytelling and folklore (Okely, 1983), could be explored further, by investigating the phenomenology of both individual and group narratives. This may lead to a greater understanding of how traditions and heritage are expressed through the generations.

Recommendations for practice

1. This research study has brought into focus the high levels of discrimination and marginalisation demonstrated towards this minority group by their surrounding communities, other Gypsy groups and a range of professionals. On a personal level when people have asked me about my subject area of research, the response by many has been to automatically share anecdotes and comments supporting a negative attitude towards Gypsies and Travellers, based on current media stories or fuelled by their individual personal experiences. The need to counter these negative and misleading narratives is very clear. By acknowledging the positive heritage and identity of the group (and other minority groups), and by operating from a sound value base, professionals are more likely to be able to engage effectively. Regular and updated training in culturally sensitive practice and a thorough understanding of unconscious bias should be made available to all front-line workers.

2. It is widely acknowledged that power relations are an important aspect of research, particularly with marginalised and vulnerable groups. This study has demonstrated that incorporating a visual component is an effective means of enabling the members of such groups to contribute to research as co participants, rather than perpetuating what is often a power divide between the researcher and the group being researched. In this study, from the beginning, respondents felt empowered to voice their opinions, on what activities they wanted and to direct how the work should be used represent their identity; this evidences the fact that they were able to take a leading role in setting the agenda in the planning of the study and in what happened to showcase their artwork. This research approach can be replicated with any group, regardless of culture.

3. Forcing a Gypsy or Traveller to live in *'bricks and mortar'* housing when they experience a strong 'cultural aversion' to such accommodation has been recognised in law as not only having a devastating impact on well-being and mental health but also being contrary to the Human Rights Act 1998 (Greenfields and Smith, 2013: 11).As highlighted in Chapter 2, the current government have announced plans to review the CJPOA which aims to give more power to the police to deal with unauthorized encampments, in effect criminalizing travelling. The costs of clearing unauthorized encampments continues to increase. A BBC Freedom of Information request found 30 councils in the south of England had spent £1.2m on cleaning up unauthorised encampments in the past three years (BBC news, 10 October 2018).

Figures produced by Friends Families and Travellers on 30 January 2019 evidence that 29% of Traveller caravans were living on public sites; 59% were on privately funded sites; 9% were in unauthorised developments on land owned by Travellers; and 3% were in unauthorised encampments on land not owned by Travellers. The Government previously made £4.7 billion available under the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-2021 which included provisions to build Gypsy and Traveller sites, yet not a single local authority has used this funding to build sites (Friends Families and Travellers, 2019). In February 2019, the government announced that they have made a further £9bn available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver 250,000 new affordable homes. To March 2022. It is essential that Gypsy Traveller groups are made aware of this and that they have involvement in the consultation and planning of how this policy will translate in terms of new pitches and location of these.

Temporary planning permission is costly and insecure and planning policy needs to be reviewed in relation to this. In previous research I identified that temporary planning permission provides additional stress for families who are living on their own land without permanent planning permission. For them it is insecure and costly, with respondents reporting high costs in renewal applications which currently must be made every 5 years, therefore offering no long-term security of tenure (Peacock and Herbert, 2014).

4. Consulting with groups using a community developmental approach rather than a more prescriptive service delivery, being open to listening to their ideas and suggestions is a more empowering way to inform future policy. Gypsies and other nomadic groups have, throughout their history, experienced plans to eliminate their lifestyle and culture through the use of a variety of strategies. The fact that they have survived these attempts and maintained a sense of group cohesion and collective identity for so long is testament to their resilience (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:7).It is clear from the findings that the participants in this study have a strong sense of their Gypsy identity and the participants generally want to pursue an authentic Gypsy lifestyle which they feel is not possible in their current accommodation; alternative solutions could be provided.

   As a group they have made valid suggestions about how future services could be delivered; they have voiced a range of realistic ideas on how accommodation needs could be met (such as transit sites), and they have aspirations for the future based on

the changes they suggest. Based on these conclusions, practitioners should consider methods of empowerment (such as those used in this study) to effectively engage with specific isolated groups.

Limits on mobility are a major cause of the social dislocation felt by many members of this community since it violates one of their most fundamental symbols of cultural and ethnic identity while simultaneously eroding cultural values that prioritize independence and autonomy (Smith and Greenfields, 2013:96). In the case of individual and collective survival in times of crisis, Gypsies and Travellers are better adapted than many other populations; they have a legacy of generations of resilience and access to strong family support networks (Smith and Greenfields, 2013: 198). Their resilience and adaptability in times of adversity evidences a strength of character and resourcefulness which could be utilized in terms of providing a network of support to other groups.

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Appendices

NB: All photographs included in this work were taken by myself and my colleague throughout the duration of the project.

Glossary of terms

Keywords: [Gypsy, Traveller, Gaudje, Gorgio, identity, belonging, traditions, culture]

Mochadi - dirty, unclean

Chop - trade

Calling - selling door to door

CJPOA - the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

Gaudje/Gorgio/Gorje – non-Gypsy

Gavver - the police

G/R/T - Gypsies, Roma, Travellers

Hawking - selling

Joddakai - apron

Joey Grey – stew

Vardo - wagon

Interviews

Name	Age	Interviewed	Regular attendee
Alfie	18	Yes	Yes
Ant	25	No	Yes
Annie	61	No	2 workshops
Bob	41	No	Yes
Billie	24	No	4 workshops
Bridie	27	No	2 workshops
Charlie	56	No	Yes
Chrissie	59	No Chrissie died in 2016	
Daisy	19	No	6 workshops
Denny	21	No	2 workshops
Eileen	62	Yes Eileen died in 2017	Yes
Eva	59	No	Yes
Hannah	30	Yes	Yes
Immie	12	No	3 workshops
Isobelle	30	Yes	Yes

Jack	25	Yes	Yes
Jessie	24	Yes	Yes
Jim	50	Yes	Yes
Jimmie	17	No	Yes
Joe	62	Yes	No
Junior	11	No	4 workshops§
Len	56	Yes Len died in 2017	Yes
Lottie	36	Yes	Yes
Marie	23	No	3 workshops
Mary	70	Yes	No
Mikey	25	No	2 workshops
Nancy	43	Yes	Yes
Patricia	48	Yes	Yes
Primrose	45	Yes	No
Ruth	46	Yes	Yes
Sammy	39	Yes	Yes
Samuel	22	No	Yes
Sid	85	Yes	No
Stella	29	No	Yes
Tanya	10	No	No

Table A. 2 participants attending the workshops

Date	What happened	Outcome	Activity
8/2/2016	Initial meeting with Community worker (CW1) in her home in order to negotiate access to the community	Agreement reached for the project	Meeting
11/3/2016	Application made for funding To the Big Lottery to fund the activities	Funding applied for	
10/5/2016	Notification of funding success – second meeting with Community worker in local pub to plan dates of meetings and discuss ideas	Budgets set up Session dates arranged and costings agreed	Meeting
21/6/2016	Meeting with Chrissie, Eileen and CW1 in local pub Community consultants	Community consultants agreed	Lunch time meeting

23/6/2016	Meeting with Bob and Nancy – community consultants - in local pub	Community consultants agreed	Lunch time meeting
30/6/2016	Diabetes session – in the community hall (Re) Introduction to the community and planning of the workshops 25 attendees	Successful introduction to the project	
5/7/2016	Workshop 1: 10 participants Drawing and painting – Sven Berlin's paintings and other images	Discussions about the clay workshops - arrangements made Consent forms agreed – ongoing as new participants arrive	Group meeting Workshops planned –
5/7/2016	Meeting Jack	4 semi structured interviews completed	
12/7/2016	Workshop 2: 13 participants		First clay workshop
12/7/2016	Interview with Eileen		
12/7/2016	Interview with Nancy		
26/7/2016	Nancy and Brexit – Travelling discussion – complaints about Ruth working in the fields recorded workshop conversation	Workshop discussion Fired objects painted Discussion about future activities	Second Clay workshops
4/8/2016	Interview with Mary - semi structured interview in her home	Interview recorded	Interview
17/8/2016	Meeting with SS Consultation	Interview recorded	Meeting
13/9/2016	Workshop 3 18 participants Complaints about food preparation	Topic: Jigging dolls workshop conversation	

27/9/2016	Workshop 4 - 20 participants Collaborative working		Making clay horses, plates etc
11/10/2016	Workshop 5 - 21 participants Billy and travelling		Painting the clay
11/10/2016	Interview with Rose 2 semi structured interviews		
11/10/2016	Interview with Bob		
18/10/2016	Workshop 6 - 16 participants	Conversation about death	Making aprons
18/10/2016	Interview with Sammy 6 semi structured interviews		
18/10/2016	Interview with Joe		
18/10/2016	Interview with Lottie		
18/10/2016	Interview with Primrose		
18/10/2016	Interview with Sid		
8/11/2016	Workshop 7 - 14 participants Bitterly cold day Mikey discussion about Travellers		Painting Canvasses Aprons
22/11/2016	Workshop 8 - 16 participant Scout hut		Christmas lanterns and decorations
22/11/2016	Interview with Daisy		
22/11/2016	How to make rasher pudding recorded workshop conversation		
22/11/2016	Marriage and identity - recorded workshop conversation		

29/11/2016	Workshop 9 - 16 participants		Paper flowers
6/12/2016	Workshop 10 – 22 participants		Christmas lanterns and decorations – Holly wreaths
6/12/2016	Topic: Eileen and the adoption recorded workshop conversation		
6/12/2016	Interview with Patricia 3 semi structured interviews		
6/12/2016	Interview with Jim		
11/3/2017	Workshop 11 – 18 participants		Painting canvasses
11/3/2017	Interview with Ruth		
21/3/2017	Workshop 12 - 15 participants Discussion about the media		Making jewellery boxes
	Workshop 13		
9/5/2017	Topic: The story of Benny's well recorded workshop conversation		Making Flags
23/5/2017	Workshop 13 15 participants		Finishing off exhibition materials
23/5/2017	Interview (2) with Ruth 2 semi structured interviews		
23/5/2017	Interview with Len		
25/5/2018	Second Meeting with housing		
5/6/2018	Setting up the exhibition		
17/6/2018	Exhibition event		
13/7/2017	Final workshop 14 12 participants To return works of art to the owners		Final Group meeting

13/7/2017	Interview with Jessie		
13/07/2017	Interview with Alfie		

Table A.3 – table of events

About the core group of participants

Bob – aged 41 years
Bob has been married to Nancy has two children – one (Millie) aged 17 and the other, (Denny) 20. Both children live at home. Millie is at college doing a course in child care. Denny is not in education or employment. Bob has lived in the area all his life – he has other immediate family members living nearby but does not speak to them at all. Bob works on a self - employed basis as a house clearer and labourer – he says he takes on lots of different work. He and Nancy have been married for 25 years and have recently celebrated their silver wedding anniversary – to which I was invited. They own their own home after taking advantage of the right to buy scheme.

The family are neighbours to Ruth and they give her a lot of support with her family problems.

Bob was interviewed and attended 8 workshops

Billy – aged 24 years.
Billy lived at home in the village for all of his life – he lived locally for the first few months of the project and then moved away to live with a relative. He is the youngest of four children and was identified as needing specialist education following a statement of educational needs when he was 7. Billy also has a physical disability. Billy attended 4 workshops.

I first met Billy as a toddler

Charlie – aged 56.
Charlie is father to 3 children and is separated from their mother – Patricia. She left the family several years ago when the children were quite small. He has lived in the village since childhood and still lives in the same house that he was brought up in. He was a single father to Isobelle, Mickie and Jessie. Charlie attended every workshop, and fully participated in making a number of artefacts - however he was only involved in one short interview about travelling.

Daisy – aged 19
Daisy's parents moved away from the village several years ago and lives in a nearby town. She still sees the families on a regular basis. Daisy did not attend the workshops but undertook an interview.

Eileen – aged 62
Eileen has lived in the locality all her life, and was raised on the compounds. She has five daughters – three of whom are adopted. Eileen is married to a non- Gypsy. Eileen was an active participant at the workshops – however her life long friend Chrissie died just after the

project began. Eileen was grieving for some weeks after this. Eileen contributed some really useful ideas and suggestions for the project and undertook an interview.

Eva – aged 59
Eva is a widow and has two daughters and a grandson. Her daughter and her grandson live with her in the village, as they have done all their lives. Eva was one of 16 children, and her parents lived on the compounds. Eva participated in the workshops when she felt like doing so and she and her daughter always chose to sit at a separate table – sometimes the grandson also attended. They came most weeks – arriving when they chose to. They engaged well with me. Eva did not want to be interviewed.

Jack - aged 25
Jack attended the first six workshops but did not participate in the workshops – he was always on the outskirts. He had some conversations with me during the course of the workshops but did not want to answer questions. He gave his permission to be recorded (his idea) during some conversations. It was Jack who led me to the idea of using clay – he had shown me some things he had made at the day centre he attends, which really inspired me. Their quality and originality were outstanding.

Jim – aged 50
Jim has lived in the area all of his life – he is one of seven children and lives with his partner Sammy and their five children. Jim attended most of the workshops and was also interviewed.

I found him a quiet and helpful man – he was always on hand to help set up the tables and equipment, helping me unload and reload my car – without being asked to. Jim is currently unemployed but takes on occasional work as a labourer and gardener. Jim was interviewed and attended all of the workshops

Joe – aged 62
Joe lives in a nearby town, having moved away from the village several years ago. He did not attend the workshops but was interviewed. He was brought up on the compounds and has very fond memories of those days. Joe is not working due to a disability. He is married with two children.

Len – aged 56
Len lives with his long-term partner Ruth and is father to four children – the youngest is aged 17 years of age. Len has very serious health issues and has been admitted to hospital three times during the course of the project. He has recently been re housed to a town 20 miles away, having been evicted (with his family) from the home he had lived in for 47 years. Len was brought up on the compounds and was one of 16b children. Len was interviewed and also attended some of the workshops.

Lotty -aged 36
Lotty lives in a nearby town, having moved away from the village several years ago. She did not attend the workshops but was interviewed.

Mary – aged 70
Mary was brought up on the compounds and moved away when she was a child, to another part of the county. She was the only participant to have experienced travelling for a major part of her life, and she regards the community in this project as ‘not real travellers’. Mary was

interviewed twice as part of this project but did not attend any of the workshops. She was married to Keith, a Romany activist who died several years ago. Mary has five children and lives in another part of the county in her own home. Mary has never worked but used to earn money occasionally as a fortune teller. Mary did not attend the workshops but was interviewed.

Nancy – aged 43
Nancy is the eldest daughter of Eileen. She has lived in the village all of her life and is married to Bob – they have two children. Nancy was a keen participant in all of the workshops and is a key figure in the community – she supports a number of people and in particular, has done so for Ruth in recent months. She is close to her immediate family. Nancy was interviewed and attended all of the workshops

Patricia – aged 48
Patricia left the area several years ago, to live with another man some distance away. She returned to the village half way through the project, following the sudden death of her partner form a drug overdose. She is currently living with a relative in her trailer – parked in her brother's

Front garden. Patricia attended the latter half of the workshops and was interviewed. She has four children who are now living independently.

Ruth – aged 46
Ruth is Len's partner and the mother of four children. She was recently evicted from her home. She was a keen participant on all of the workshops, and was very upset to be moved away from her support systems having lived most of her life in the village. Ruth is very artisitic and she made many valuable contributions to the artwork.

Sammy – aged 39
Sammy moved into the area when she met Jim, twenty years ago. She has five children aged between five and nineteen. Sammy is unemployed and says she suffers from mental health issues. She attended most of the workshops and was interviewed.

CONSENT FORM

From heathland to housing – an analysis of the life stories of a Gypsy community who were forced into local authority housing in the South East of England

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking the time to read and discuss our project information Sheet.

If you would like to participate for the above project please tick the following to show that you understand your rights under this project.

Checklist:

a) I understand the aims of the research. [ ]

b) I understand that my participation is voluntary. [ ]

c) I know that any of my personal details on the questionnaire will be stored safely. [ ]

d) I am able to cancel the interview at any time. [ ]

e) I know that I do not have to answer any questions if I feel uncomfortable. [ ]

f) I understand that all the data collected, including photographs of myself and my work will go into a report at the end of the project. I am aware I may be given a copy of the report once it is finished. [ ]

g) I understand that the information that I give will be treated in confidence unless I disclose information about a serious and immediate risk of harm to myself or someone else, in which case I understand that you as a research team may need to take further action, such as contacting the doctor or the police. [ ]

h) All of the above points have been explained to me by the researcher. I have understood and agree to take part in this research project. [ ]

I have read and understood the project information sheet laying out the project aims, ethical guidelines, outcomes and methods. Furthermore I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research project before consenting to participate; I agree material from my interview may be used for the purpose of research or publication. I understand that no individuals will be identified in any publication or public presentation drawing on my interview material.

According to the Data Protection Act (1998) the data will be stored electronically as an encrypted file for three years. Following this time period it will be deleted.

I am aware participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any stage without prejudice.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Name:……

Field notes

NB: All photographs included in this work were taken by myself and my colleague, the community worker, throughout the duration of the project. The community worker has given her written agreement to the use of the photographs in the final report.

Field notes – reflections: workshops and meetings and significant events

Note: Actual names have been replaced with pseudonyms in the interests of confidentiality

Meeting with Elise - community worker
8th February 2016

I arranged to meet Elise at her home on 8th February – she has worked with the community for several years and she currently runs a group which meets on a regular basis at the local hall. Elise lives on the outskirts of the village in a beautiful thatched cottage overlooking open fields. Elise has dedicated her work to the families and I have known her for over 25 years – since I was a social worker in the local authority children's services department. I have often wondered why she continues to work with this community – and if she ever wanted a change – and if not, why not? Although the families are fascinating, the work is never ending and at times thankless and overwhelming because there are no solutions – or it certainly feels it at times. It is not only challenging but also frustrating - because of the high level of need and lack of support from the statutory services. The work, from my own experience, is undervalued by other professionals in the statutory sector.

As I pulled up outside the house I was again taken by the beautiful surroundings of the house. The inside is equally lovely, with open beams and a blend of antique and contemporary furniture. Elise has five children of her own and is a foster carer. She always seems calm and unphased by her hectic life.

Elise brought me up to date with the community, and the work she was involved in. The recent changes in benefits and the proposed changes ahead had caused her a great deal of work, and she was worried about how people were going to manage. Elsie runs a small charity and relies on a variety of small grants to survive alongside the goodwill of friends and family members. I have often wondered about her motivation to undertake the work she does, especially as she has done this for so many years developing her skills – attending training or seeking out new opportunities. We have both seen circle of life and the circle of deprivation and poverty – the never- ending lack of opportunity for change – no matter how much we have both tried over the years, with English and Maths classes, IT training, and even training in using chain saws. Although these were successful, it hadn't created change. The children for whom we had provided learning through play, homework clubs, mobile dentistry and other health events – have grown into adults and only a small minority are self - sufficient. I talked about this to Elise and she reminded me that the only people we work with are the ones who need us and we are not seeing those who are managing. She also said that she has seen a big increase in drug use and children being brought into the care system.

So, this confirmed what I was thinking - the fact that those parents with whom we worked years ago, who were unable to cope raising children - those children themselves are parents now, and they are also unable to cope. The lack of employment opportunities and the fact that so many of them are living in poverty is disheartening. Elise's role is autonomous, she is completely in control of what she does and how her charity is funded – she will only apply for funding which she feels is going to enable her to do what she wants to do or what she feels is needed by the community. Her aim has always been to keep the organisation small enough for

her to manage together with Lou, a part time community worker. I have in the past had concerns about the lack of professionalism - this sounds very pompous but I mean by this the fact that service users come to her house and the fact that the charity is run from her home. Being a registered social worker means that there is a code of ethics that I must adhere to as laid down by the Health Care Professionals Council, and working on our own means that you do not have the benefits of being able to access supervision and support – which I feel is essential when you are undertaking complex work with vulnerable people. Elise and I have discussed the pros and cons of this over the years. Having said all of this, she does an incredible amount of work with very little and has accomplished some positive achievements such as the publication of her book about the community. And more importantly, the community like her and trust her.

Having heard about what was going on in the community, my project seemed a bit irrelevant. I talked through my project ideas, and Elise said she was happy for me to work with her – she said I could operate when she had group meetings and in return I would apply for a grant to pay for the hall rent and other resources. Elise reassured me that she felt the community would appreciate having the opportunity to participate in arts and crafts and she would still be able to run her support sessions alongside the workshops.

We had some discussion about the situation regarding the hall. When I had first starting work in the local authority (as a community development worker) I had the responsibility for setting up a mobile project. This was in response to a report from the under 8's forum who had identified high numbers of children who were not attending pre-school and who were living in areas which were lacking in resources and disadvantaged by rural isolation. Thorney hill was the first place I visited. I was using a mobile resource to visit targeted areas right on the door step of those who needed an accessible place to meet.

I worked with this community for several years and was involved in setting up a variety of projects – campaigning for school transport, advocating for parents who were the subject of child protection issues and low levels of school attendance. The community then asked me to help them get their own community centre. This was a challenging piece of work which I undertook – being donated land, applying for planning permission, having charitable status and the funding for the new building. I felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction when the building became a reality in 2004.

However, a series of events in the community led to a major rift in the community. This has led to many of them feeling that they are not able to use the hall. It also means that I too am unable to hire the hall due to my association with them. It is a complicated situation because of the various things that have happened along the years and it is upsetting to see that all the work I and others did to achieve this well-equipped building, has ended in this situation.

The hall is situated in the middle of the community and is easily accessible. It is also ideal for the community to use – it has a separate kitchen and meeting room and is also reasonable to hire. Elise said she would be happy to book the hall – although she also added that she too has problems hiring the venue - but she would do her best. She thought that meeting every fortnight was the best option.

I had set up a small charity several years ago – using this for running play - schemes and other small community events. I explained to Elise that I could apply for some funding to pay for hall rent and the resources to run art and craft workshops.

I said I would let her know what was happening and I would be in touch. We agreed that we would keep in touch and she would approach the warden about hiring the hall when the time Is right.

21/6/2016 - Meeting with Chrissie, Eileen and CW1 in local pub Community consultants

I then met with Chrissie and Eileen, two older women from the community – both of whom I had known for many years, and whom I hoped might be prepared to also act as consultants. We went for lunch to another local pub - their preferred choice. I had not seen these two women for several years and I was particularly shocked, and saddened by the appearance of Chrissie. She seemed to have a fragility about her which made her seem much older than her age (59) and her mobility was very restricted. I was surprised that she seemed so unwell. Despite her ill health, she was interested in the project, making some suggestions of whom to involve – although I felt there was a sense of her having 'given up' on life in general as at time she seemed to be distracted and staring into space. I was later to see this fatalistic attitude and acceptance in other participants.

On the other hand, Eileen liked the idea of participating in some creative workshops - she said that she felt that this is one way in which traditions can be leant and then passed down, which was important to her.

She added that she would love to know how to make the reed baskets – this would then enable her to pass on her skills to her children and grandchildren. She knows how to make flowers, pegs and willow baskets and also pegs and holly wreaths and would be happy to show others how to do this. Eileen also felt holding some craft sessions in a local hall, would be a good opportunity for people to get together.

I had explained the reason for the research to both groups and openly said that the end result for me would be an academic qualification - I added that I wanted them to gain something out of the project at the same time.

Eileen commented, 'I don't mind helping you Jane – but it won't make any difference to us will it?' I replied that I hoped that they would enjoy the process of the project and hoped the outcome would be positive for us all. Although she seemed resigned in the way that she voiced this comment, during our conversation I noticed that her face lit up and her voice became animated when she talked about the past and how as children they used to work on Lock's farm potato picking.

> 'You were out in the fresh air all day earning a shilling –
> they were great days, you could just do your own thing'
> Eileen.

I said to Eileen and Chrissie how much I was looking forward to working with them.

Meeting with Nancy and Bob 23/6/2016

In order to make contact with the community in question, the first step was to engage with specific group members/collaborators – I arranged to meet up with some of the group, following the advice of the Elise, local community worker about whom that should be. She suggested that I firstly approach Nancy, whom she felt would be a key person in encouraging others to attend, and that she would be as what Convery refers to as a 'community consultant' (Convery and O'Brien, 2008 : 342).

I met with Nancy and Bob, her husband, taking them out to a local pub for some lunch – at their suggestion. I was pleased with their response and that they readily agreed with my proposal for the research, and that they too (independently) suggested holding some arts and craft sessions in a local hall as a way of capturing peoples' interest and willingness to be part of the process. In our discussions, Nancy said that she feels they are still a strong community –

still quite connected. She liked the idea of making a Gypsy caravan sewing box, jewelry making, and learning to crochet. In terms of hiring a hall – Nancy felt there would be a problem with hiring the local hall and suggested an alternative, another community hall about 2 miles down the road. She agreed to get the number of the caretaker.

As we were talking, a group pf young men passed by – a scruffy looking group wearing hoodies and caps – not baseball caps but more traditional caps. I wondered where they were going in the middle of the day. Nancy began talking about the high level of drug use in the community and how the young people were unable to find work and were just 'hanging about'. She said she was worried about her own boy. He had opted out of college and was not working. He had spent time in prison the previous year whilst awaiting trial but was later acquitted. Bob said he was disappointed that he hadn't followed in his own footsteps and come to work with him on house clearances and scrap dealing.

Nancy added:

Nancy: "my son embraces his Gypsy culture more than his sister"

Jane: "Really … In what ways?"

Nancy: "Well ……er …he always carries his catapult, goes coursing, he wears his rings and all his friends are Gypsy boys." She turned to Bob for his agreement – he nodded.

Nancy went on to talk about discrimination and how the young men were always being stopped by the police – even when they were just walking along the road. "It doesn't stop" she said".

Nancy added that she was very interested in the project and said: "I'm a Gypsy – the most hated culture of all. My ancestors were immigrants. In the old days you could be killed for being a Gypsy."

I said I would be most interested in talking more about this.

Meeting at the Forest Arts Centre

9th September 2016

On 9th September I met with the director of a local arts centre as arranged by a previous phone call. I wanted to see if there was any possibility of us having some space for an exhibition of the work produced by the participants. I have identified form reading my notes that on several occasions I have re-visited situations, places and people, and today was no exception. I have worked as a community artist for over 20 years, running projects for children and also adults who use adult mental health services, and the layout of the building and meeting areas were very familiar. The staff were all new to me.

It felt odd being back there again after so many years of being away, and it also felt strange not seeing any faces that I recognised. The arts centre has been in the area since after the second world war – originally designed and constructed in the style of a Nissan hut, with a corrugated iron bow - top roof. In the 90's, the centre received funding and it was extended and refurbished with a state of the art, dance studio, offices, and an improved theatre space.

There is a café area where there are tables and chairs, and a comfortable sofa – creating an informal yet smart ambience. There is also a bar where a range of refreshments can be served.

The reception area leads into another workshop area – which was where I used to deliver art and craft sessions. This visit brought back many happy memories of the past.

After a few minutes, the director and the local arts development worker came to meet me in the reception area, to discuss ideas for the exhibition. The initial dates we had discussed on the phone, were no longer viable and I wondered if it would be possible to do something to celebrate Gypsy Traveller and Roma month – which is held in June. Surprisingly, the centre could facilitate this due to a cancellation, and the dates were agreed – the 8th – 22nd June 2017. The director said she would come and meet with the community to talk to them about it. I was also to set up a meeting with a woman from Hampshire Music Service who wanted to work with us.

Death

Reflections on the day that Ria died

17 Sept 2016

Nancy had invited me to a celebration of Gypsy Traveller heritage at Thorney Hill in the little church on the hill. I didn't know what to expect from the evening, as I had little information, but I wanted to support Nancy as she had helped organize the event as a fundraiser for a new roof. Interestingly, her son had been accused and was later acquitted of stealing lead from the church roof, and since then she had been active on helping the church to raise funds.

The music event was a really interesting evening - it consisted of a variety of songs, step dancing and poetry – with a presentation in the background of paintings by the artist, Alice Gillington. I had not heard of her until this evening, so it was something new. She did many paintings of Gypsy life in the New Forest and had lived for some time in Thorney Hill. Her paintings depicted life there at the time. She published works under the names Alice E. Gillington, Betty Gillington and The Romany Rawny. Gillington also moved into a Gyspy caravan, where she lived amongst local Gypsy folk until she died. I was surprised to learn about Gillington and even more surprised that I hadn't known anything about her until today.

I went into the church and was surprised to see a large congregation settled in the church. Everyone was sitting in a circle - they were mainly made up of the older middle-class women and some men. Sitting in front was it was a group large group of musicians – fiddlers, guitarists, pianists and a pianist. Tonight, the audience was made up mainly of the wider community, a selection of older and more middle-class people than I may have expected to see there. The reason for this, I soon learnt, is that Ria had died suddenly in the afternoon. She was fifty-seven. Although about 25 people form the Gypsy community had bought tickets, they hadn't come to the event. This was both out of respect for her, and also the shock and grief at her sudden death. She been diagnosed with cancer no longer than three weeks beforehand but had been expected to live another year. There was an overwhelming feeling of sadness from the few that were there who knew her.

The musicians began playing what sounded to me like traditional folk music - until more people came in and settled in their seats. As the evening progressed, we heard a selection of traditional stories and songs.

It became an important aspect of my research to hear these stories and the music and to witness this celebration of an artist who had lived among the ancestors of this community. One of the men in the group of musicians has undertaken a great deal of research into the songs and literature and paintings of the family and also the artist Amelia Goddard. I didn't know anything about her paintings either - some of which were displayed on a PowerPoint. For the first time, I saw actual step dancing - this traditional dance that I had heard so much about it, form Eileen especially. She had told me this was a Gypsy dance and had demonstrated her dancing to me once at a culture evening.

Then, Gypsy storyteller Peter Ingram, told a story - in his true talent of storytelling he captivated the audience. Following that, Peter began to dance himself- again the audience were captivated by him. At one point, he stopped and told the congregation that he was going to set up a jigging doll. I had never seen one of these before. He sat on a chair and he held the wooden doll in his hand – a stick came out from the back of the doll and with a piece of wood (which he had under his other arm), he made the doll move up and down as if it were step dancing.

At this time, a young woman from the community came in, with two younger men and two children. I'd also been joined earlier by Nancy and Bob. Nancy was very upset by the death of her Auntie Chrissie. Daisy arrived with her young husband and two children, who were also very distressed, and it was some time before they all stopped crying. Nancy told me that her own mother had collapsed and fainted with the shock of what had happened.

The show was very well organized - at one point that Simon took out some other jigging dolls and encouraged audience participation. I persuaded two young girls to participate in this, and reluctantly they did. They were each given a doll and a piece of board to practice on. The audience clapped and joined in I felt this was an important occasion, as this is the first time these two girls had seen anything like this before. When the audience were able to join in with some of the dancing, led by the instructors, the two girls also did the same.

Despite the fact that Chrissie had died, and the way that death is viewed by the community, there was a comfort in some of the community being together there. It was clear that many there valued the shared experience of those two little girls. As I left, I had a conversation with Bob who was standing on his own outside the church. Usually, he is very jovial but as I was leaving, and as I said goodbye to him, he seemed very quiet and subdued. I asked him if he was okay – he said life is very sad and it made him think that sometimes he would rather be on his own. I asked him what he meant and he replied:

“ Well if you're on your own then you haven't got anybody to worry about have you, so when you know you’re gonna die, you don't have to worry about them that’s been left behind. So I’d rather be on my … when I think about that I don't want others to be in pain because I have gone.”

I was taken aback by Bob’s serious tone of voice and the emotion behind it – he is normally a very jocular man - always ready with a joke or banter. I was unsure how to respond to this but after a short pause I said:

“Your family all love you Bob”

“That’s just it,” he said.

At this point Nancy came out and after saying a few goodbyes, the couple left.

Thinking through the event

I was aware that an atmosphere of sadness was there even as I approached the church gates – where one of the Gypsy community was standing. He greeted me (pleasantly) by name, although I hadn't seen him for several years. As I got out of the car I saw another older man sitting on a bench I recognised him as Peter Ingram - well known for his storytelling and step dancing. He is famous for sharing the heritage and traditions of the Gypsy community with his stories, and for passing this on to younger members. He too remembered my name and greeted me – this reminded me that in my experience with this community, people are very skilled at remembering faces – reinforcing the fact that it is essential to engage positively with people from the first encounter, as this will be remembered, even many years later.

During the evening I had spoken to one of the musicians, who was from Hampshire Music Services. We discussed how we could provide an evening or daytime workshop for young people in the community so that the traditional art of step dancing is not lost forever. it was notable that the people who are participating as instructors and musicians are all professionals and middle-aged and this made me reflect on the fact that the tradition will soon be gone and lost to this community forever. I also wondered had what had happened to Amelia Goddard's paintings and where they stored.

I talked to Jo about the exhibition ideas and then we talked some ideas through with the community. Jo had to go and then a bit later Janet from the Arts centre, came to meet the participants. She asked what people thought about the idea and they were happy to go ahead with the ideas. Janet was impressed with the work they had done. We talked about the idea of having a community workshop on one of the days and they liked that idea.

The arts centre is not somewhere that the community would normally frequent, so it is important that they feel that this is arranged with as much of their input as possible and not just by us. There were offers of help form Nancy, Sammy, Charlie and Ruth. I suggested some demonstrations such as flower making, and they were very keen on this idea and came up with some ideas of their own. It is a long time until the exhibition, so I guess things will change by the time comes around.

In terms of the exhibition – I feel that it is important that the event is not seen as a middle-class event which will exclude the very people who are the artists. I re-assured the group that the exhibition would only be organised with their input.

Description of activity

27th September 2016

Making clay horses

Talking about ancestry

This was the second session after the summer break. Some of the group had said they wanted to make clay models of horses and although Jackie thought that these would be difficult to construct, she had agreed that we would 'have a go'. She had brought with her the rods and other tools to enable these to be built Jackie gave each person a lump of clay to knead – seven of the group decided they wanted to make horses, whilst the others in the group finished painting their designs or plates which had been fired. Jackie had brought along some additional resources for others in the group to paint. People soon settled own and were focused on their work, whilst chatting.

Today, whilst they were working on their projects, Elise stood by the work tables and was talking to the group about her Heritage project, where she was in the process of working with

them on compiling a family tree. She had gained funding from the Heritage Trust and this enabled her to take some DNA samples to trace peoples' lineage. Some people had had their results and Ruth told the group that her partner Len had just received his results, which showed that he had 2% percentage of Asian heritage. It also showed that he was related directly to other members in the community, the latter of which was of no surprise to anyone. Eileen then said her test had revealed similar findings. This news led to a discussion about heritage and family. Some people began to talk about how others were much darker – Eva for example commented on the fact that some people said she was black and made insulting remarks. Her brother Len is also dark and yet most of the group are fairer in appearance. This led to some discussion about race and colour.

Eva then said : 'None of us have got Asian names though have we?"

Eileen: "No, but this was centuries ago remember".

Nancy: "If you think about it, it would seem that if we came from India then we aren't going to have common names like Cooper and that, are we. So that's because we took the names of the places we stayed … like the Barrel makers names for instance. So that's where the name Cooper came from …barrel makers."

Rose: "It's a bit like in slavery when the slaves took their names from their owners"

Nancy: " Yes, they took names of their owners and they can't trace their ancestry that easily either …I've read loads about it"

Eileen: "Some say our name (Doe)came from the forest. "

Nancy: "Of course there are some people who have the same names but they are Gypsies – like Cooper for example. That's a common name isn't it …but not every Cooper is a Gypsy are they…some aren't Gypsies"

Eileen: "What about the name Doe I wonder?

The topic led to an animated discussion about family and family names. Rose was saying that she had tried (unsuccessfully) to trace her family tree through a website, but this had proved difficult because, as was (and still is) the custom in the community, her ancestors had used different names in the past. Rose explained that people took different names from different sides of the family.

Rose: "Granny took her own Granny's name – but my other gran had taken mum's dad's name's like James, for instance and some took their mums names. And then some took their dads names."

Eileen: " Yes …so if you look at the family graves, people will have different names sometimes even though they are related."

Nancy: " But whatever name they took, it's family that matters, it's all about family. We're very close to family, especially our immediate family. Family is really important - even our extended family really. Maybe it's all we've got left now.

Most people in the community here are related to each other in some way or other. We are such a big family that we could meet somebody and not even know that they were a relative. See Granny had 11 kids in her family, and if they've all gone on to have kids, it would be very difficult to keep track of all those people or even know where or who they are."

Sammy: " I think you are right Nancy …family is about all we have these days. "

Rose: "That's why we have to look after each other".

Billy – going travelling
11/10/2016

I had arrived at the centre and after saying hello and making general conversation with the people waiting outside; I began setting up the tables and chatting to the people who were in the room. Then Billy arrived and he came up and asked to speak to me. He was excited and clearly proud and pleased to be telling me his news.

Billy: "A friend has bought a piece of land and he told me I could live on it if I got himself a trailer."
Jane: "Where is this?"
Billy: "It's about 2 hours drive away. It's on the motor way."
Jane: " Have you seen where it is?"
Billy: "Yeah, my friend showed me"
Jane: "That sounds exciting….So how are you going to live Billy?" *I knew that he was currently living with his parents*
Billy: "I'd live on benefits, like everyone does".
Jane: "Yes but do you know how you would manage – you know, looking after yourself?"
Billy: "I'd manage ok".
Jane: "What about your washing and stuff?"
Billy: "I'd do that in the streams, and I would get water from the streams".

I really didn't know how to answer this – it seemed somewhat unrealistic to me, but I didn't say this. There was a pause and then Sammy – who had taken a chair and was sitting at the table looking at the resources suddenly said:

Sammy: "I wish I lived in a caravan."
Jane: "Do you? Have you lived in one before?"
Sammy : "Yes when I was a kid. I used to stay there a lot with my aunty"
Jane: "That must have been fun Sammy. But maybe not in the winter".
Sammy: "Yes it was fun …and hard sometimes too".

This brief conversation really reminded me of something that happened several years ago with Billy's family. It was in about 1998, when I was a social worker working in the area office at the time. I had a phone call from a community worker I knew (Elise, whom was working with the community even then). She said that she was very concerned that Billy's parents had decided that they had had enough of the arguments where they were living up in Thorneyhill. They had decided to go travelling, and the community worker felt that they were very ill equipped to do this. I knew that it was a spur of the moment decision, a reaction to the situation rather than a thought through plan. In addition to themselves, they had four young children, one of whom was suffering from severe asthma – resulting in hospital admissions on many occasions) and two of the children had special educational needs statements which had identified quite profound learning disabilities.

I remember distinctly going up to the village to talk to them. The father was adamant that he was going. He kept falling out with one of the neighbours, who was quite a violent and challenging man and it had been enough for him. He was going to pull his children out of school and go off. I asked how they would live? He said that they had bought a trailer for 300 quid from a friend and he been promised jobs working on farms in Dorset, Somerset and down as far as Cornwall. He was going to go potato picking, and then as the year progressed, follow the seasons and pick whatever vegetables were around. He added that he'd also been promised some labouring work. His mind was made up and there was to be no further discussion. They were going on 5 November.

So, on quite a cold winter's day, I went up to say goodbye to the family, taking some additional bedding food and some clothes etc. I was horrified to see that the trailer they'd bought was in

fact a tiny touring caravan. It was going to be cramped with 6 of them living in it all the time. I was concerned.

Later that day, after we waved them off, I had a phone call from the housing department - from the housing using manager in fact. He asked me what had happened to the family. I explained, and he said: 'Well, I just want you to know, and this is absolutely definite, that family will not be rehoused when they return to the New Forest - as they undoubtedly will - because things won't work out for them'. His view was that they haven't got a clue on how hard it would be.

It was several weeks later just before Christmas when I heard an update that didn't surprised me. The family had returned to the area (in a crisis) and were currently living with a relative. The house was overcrowded as the family they were with had three teenagers living, there plus 3 adopted children. S, the third child had had a very severe asthma attack, and had been admitted to hospital and was seriously ill. She stayed in hospital for three weeks. During that time, her parents had found it very difficult to cope. The jobs J had been promised hadn't materialised; the heating in the trailer was very limited, and there was a lot of damp. When I visited them, they told me they were very cold, and their bedding would be drenched overnight – every night – wet with condensation. They had run out of money because J was unable to work and they were unable to claim benefits due to the fact that they were nomadic. They were homeless with by this time, no money to live on. I phoned the housing manager and he agreed to meet with me. So, I met with the housing manager and we discussed the case. I went through the story with him. I explained to him that J had a diagnosed learning disability and that when he decided to go travelling, he had really no notion of what this would involve. He had made his decision, simply on the spur of the moment, having had enough of the neighbourhood disputes. Unable to handle it, he had just gone. He hadn't thought ahead about the winter months coming. Having never travelled before, it was something that he'd heard about in romantic stories, and tales from his parents and grandparents. The reality had just been completely different, and once the work had not turned up, they were penniless. Having to wash bedding in launderettes and buy food from supermarkets like everyone else, had taken its toll. They ran out of what little money they had with them very quickly. Desperately worried about the health of his child, he had no option but to return to the area and move in with his sister. To my surprise, the housing manager was very understanding. By using my case notes, and by compiling a case study I was able to write a report to the housing office and to the councillors of the local authority. Fortunately, they understood the situation with compassion, and J and his family were rehoused. In fact, they were rehoused in the house that they had left - and they continue to live there to this day.

Billy's romanticized view of life 'on the road' is something that has cropped up again and again. So, Billy thought he could wash his clothes in a stream - I guess that this may be possible but there is a lot more to it than just that. I didn't want to say this to him right now – I didn't want to be negative, but I was concerned. I knew that Elise knew more about Billy's situation and this may not be quite as they seemed .

6/12/2016 Workshop 10 - 16 participants
Eileen and the adoption
This is about Eileen and the adoption of the three children. She adopted them when they were babies and the eldest is now 25 years of age. Two of the three have their own children. Eileen's older two girls were teenagers at the time – the discussion includes an interesting view of the role of the women.

Jane So how old were the children when they came to you?

Eileen	The first one was about nine months because they left them with the parents - hoping that the parents could make a go of it. But then she came to me. So then social services came to me and asked me if I would have the other two sisters of the baby.
Jane	Is the mum still alive?
Eileen	Yes she's still around. She went on to have other children she had two children before she had the three girls and they were taken. It is sad.
Jane	Yes it is sad …but it's good that they kept the three girls together.
Eileen	Billy (the father) tried to make a go of it. They were living in the caravan at the time - then she did silly things didn't she? She had them in a really sorry state. So the children's social worker did a report and they came to live with us.
Jane	You've done incredibly well Eileen. It is a big thing to take on three children.
Eileen	Yeah, well we had our family early which we did. And then when the children got older we were gonna go off travelling. You know, once we got our freedom back, but it never worked out that way. Suddenly there were three more.
Jane	You've done a great job though Eileen.
Nancy	Except for that little spoilt brat
Jane	Do you think they are they spoilt then Nancy?
Nancy	Yeah they do get a bit spoilt [laughing], the youngest especially.
Eileen	But you never complained and Nancy knows we spoilt them two as well! So you can't complain! They've all done silly things.
Nancy	Yeah we'll all make silly mistakes as children and parents.
Eileen	The thing is when you have children they don't come with a manual, do they.
Jane	That's why in some cultures it is the grandparents who are bringing up the children.
Eileen	My grandchildren are always around me.
Jane	I've noticed that a lot of times people say they have learnt traditions etc from their grandmother. In Gypsy culture, do the grandparents have a say?
Eileen	Yes the grandparents have a say in what's going on but it's down to the parents to bring the child up too.
Jane	And is it the mum or the dad who has more say in bringing up children?

Eileen		Well it's the mum who is with the children all the time, so she makes decisions. But if the dad doesn't agree or thinks something should have a different way, then it's his word that goes.
Mandy	*(crochet teacher)*	Yes I've never been very good at doing what I am being told to do.
Jane		No …do you know what I am exactly the same. I don't like being told what to do by a man just because he is a man.
Eileen		Yes I know what you mean … but my partner is not like that.
Jane		But sadly it's still like that for some women.
Eileen		Yes … there's some men who are like that … difficult … some of them like the drink too much that's the problem. I have been very lucky, I have a good man.
Nancy		I think it's basically bad luck or something like that. So going back to that TV program I didn't agree that the little girl should have her haircut … she didn't want to have a haircut well to be honest she wants to follow a career in modelling and she's not really following Gypsy traditions anyway. But it was better than some of the other programmes … one of the children was Paddy Doherty's granddaughter wasn't it? I didn't realise he lived in Wales and he has bought his own site.
Rose		I thought the boys in the programme might have been a little bit of a handful.
Jenny		Yes and some of the other children whereas I thought Paddy Doherty's granddaughter cam over really really well.
Rose		One of them looked just like Billy … you know the man that runs Appleby fair so I think they must be related to him but I wondered why Billy himself wasn't on it.
Nancy		Yes I thought so too.
Rose		It was really annoying when the girl talked about her family and how the women didn't work. That's just not true, some women do work.
Nancy		She was breaking with traditions though wasn't she, saying she was gonna get a job as a model.

9/5/2017 Workshop 13
Folk stories

Today I asked the group: 'I just want to ask you something; I read this book was written in the 1800s and this bloke who spoke was saying that when the Gypsies first arrived they bought with them lots and lots of folk stories and these folks stories and tales carried on and on through generations. Some people then said it was an Asian thing to do. As we know, the

Gypsies came from India. But the chap in this book said it was to do with the Gypsies, it was them who started it. I just wanted to know if you've heard any of these old stories?'

Nancy: Well the stories that we tell are mostly ghost stories. We tell them to the little kids - like when they are naughty, 'summits gonna come and get you.

Jane: Was that you Nancy that told me that when you were naughty your parents and grandparents said that something bad was going to happen?

Nancy: Yes… So there was a story they told about somebody who was coming down the hill. This is what my dad told me anyway. He was coming along the road pulling an old horse and trailer. Something happened and the trailer got stuck. Out of the blue, a parson dressed in black appeared and he helped him get the trailer out. When the man turned round to say thank you and good night to the pastor, he'd gone - completely disappeared even though the road was empty.

Eileen: Then there was a story about a baby down the Well. It is said that about a certain time of night, people said there used to be a baby crying down from the bottom of the well – Benny's well. When someone checked there was nothing there – but they can still hear crying now and then at certain times of the year.

Nancy : One day my granfer was with a horse and cart and he was riding down the road. Suddenly he saw a big black thing in the road. He had to get out and move it. When he passed by it with his horse and carriage, he put the black thing back and a voice said: 'good job you put me back' and suddenly it went off in a puff of flames. There was another story he told us about seeing a lady walking down Valley Lane – she had no head and would be seen often walking down there.

Nancy: We still tell the children these stories

Jessie: Sometimes when we have a bonfire together, we sit around the fire toasting our marshmallows and when its dark, we tell the stories.

3/5/2017 Final workshop 14
12 participants

Setting up the exhibition - 5 th June 2017 – journal notes

Early on in the project, the community asked if they would be able to display their art work somewhere. Although this was unexpected, it was important to enable the group to fulfil their wishes. The arts development worker from the local arts centre visited one of the workshops, and a community event and exhibition was arranged to be held in the arts centre. It was agreed that this would be held in June, to celebrate Gypsy Roma and Traveller month. Once the date had been set, we agreed that we needed to produce some additional items for the display at the arts centre. It was a priority that the exhibition was inclusive and that it reflected the true aims of the project. It was the community's idea to promote the local Gypsy community and to raise awareness of positive aspects of their ethnicity, and to challenge discrimination. Most of the participants were eager to be involved in the preparation of artifacts for the exhibition. The group seemed much more interested in running the community workshops. Through this I learnt that the exhibition itself and the opening event may be more likely to be of interest to other local residents, rather than the group themselves.

This week saw the opening of the exhibition – 'From heathland to housing'. Today, I arrived at the art centre, as arranged. I spent the day working alongside the arts development worker (Jackie) to erect the displays. It was hard work and not something that I am experienced in

doing, so I was extremely grateful that Jackie was there to guide me. She had ensured that the wall space and cabinets were empty and ready for our displays. I had unloaded all the materials for the exhibition into the Arts centre, with most of them being transported in large plastic boxes in my car. I was delighted when Om arrived at the Arts centre to help me – she had given up her own time to do so. We laid everything out and grouped the items together. In addition to our displays Jackie had arranged to have some information from Hampshire County Council library services, who have a display called the 'Living Album'. This was from an oral history project conducted by the local authority (and funded by the local heritage fund) in 2011, and comprises of display boards, photographs and a video depicting the lives of the Gypsy community in Hampshire.

Alongside our display, would be some paintings by the artist Amelia Goddard. She had spent much of her life living in Thorney Hill from the late 1930's, where she initially lived with her brother in a bow top wagon. The local Gypsy families were the subjects of many of her paintings.

The three of us worked well together selecting various pieces of work from the participants to be displayed alongside the work of this professional artist. We also had a number of photographs of the workshops and newspaper cuttings and archive material of the compounds to display. I had some black photo frames which could be used for these. Om and I spent a while putting the photos into the frames and deciding where they should be hung.

The arrangements were that the opening event would take place on 7th June 2017. I would make a short opening speech and the centre would provide refreshments. On the 15th June there would be an event provided by Hampshire Music Service and featuring story teller Peter Ingram – the performance is entitled the Hither Side of the Hedge. The exhibition would close with a free community day where children and their families would be able to access workshops and opportunities to enjoy a variety of activities. The events were advertised in local press and leaflets were distributed in all the schools in the area. We ensured that the participants were fully informed about the events, with free transport being provided. I also used some of my funding to pay for refreshments on the workshop day.

On my way home at the end of the day I went to do some shopping at a local Lidl store, where I found they were selling small aluminium milk churns containing lavender plants. Lavender has a significance to this community and the milk churns also are regarded as icons. They would add to the display, so I bought seven of these to put outside the centre and also around the displays inside. I was really pleased with my purchase.

Reflection

Own positionality, meanings

Whilst organising the material, I was aware that it would have been more empowering if some of the community were there to help set up the exhibition. I had tried to organise this without success. Nancy had said she would come in the afternoon, but she didn't arrive. I was not disappointed as I felt it was a lot to ask of people. Most of the participants would not normally use the Centre, and my main concern was that they attended some of the events – especially the workshop day. I was also really excited by the fact that Nancy, Ruth and Charlie had offered to help run some of the activities. Nancy was also helping by providing transport for others so that they could attend.

Emerging questions/ analysis

Potential lines of inquiry, theories, common narratives

I was concerned that the exhibition was inclusive and that it reflected the true aims of the project. It was their idea to promote their local Gypsy community. Although the idea was to raise awareness of the positive aspects of the community, and to challenge discrimination, the community themselves were not eagerly participating in the preparation of the exhibition. In fact, although they were happy to make things to display, there were aspects of the events that did not seem to be of interest to them – for example, attending 'The Hither side of the Hedge' performance. The group seemed much more interested in the community workshops, and I was pleased that I had suggested this. Although I was clear that my intention was not to promote my own project, but to genuinely address the lack of knowledge and awareness of the history of the local Gypsy community, I am also aware that the exhibition was more likely to be of interest to the more middle-class residents.

Having seen the publicity designed and circulated by the Centre, I had decided to create a more inclusive flyer to circulate around the participants – by letterbox and also through social media networks. I would try and encourage people to come and see their work and the displays which depict their heritage. I made contact with the community to remind them about the events and to ensure arrangements were in place.

I had enlisted the help of two friends who had agreed to come and help with the workshops so I needed to meet with them to explain their roles and make sure they had the materials.

17/6/2017 Exhibition event

The exhibition

Having seen the publicity designed and circulated by the Centre, I had decided to create a more inclusive flyer to circulate around the participants by letterbox and also through social media networks. The aim would be to try and encourage people from the Gypsy community to come and see their work and the displays which depict their heritage. It was important that the exhibition was not seen as an event which would exclude the artists themselves. The arts centre is not somewhere that the community would normally frequent, so it was important that they felt that this was arranged with as much of their input as possible and not just by myself. There were offers of help from some people to run some workshop demonstrations such as flower making, painting and model making. Transport for the participants was arranged.

Exhibition Opening event

In addition to the displays, the rts centre manager had arranged to have some information from an oral history project (The Living Album) conducted by the local authority (and funded by the local heritage fund) in 2011, comprising of display boards, photographs and a video depicting the lives of Gypsies in Hampshire. People were keen to make things to display, although there were aspects of the events that did not seem to be of interest to them – for example, attending 'The Hither side of the Hedge' which was a presentation of the work of the late Alice Gillington Amelia Goddard; both were local artists who lived in the community during the early 1920's. The latter had spent much of her life in the village from the late 1930's, where she initially lived with her brother in a bow top wagon. The local Gypsy families were the subjects of many of her paintings.

The exhibition of the work of the group was set up in the main room next to the theatre. Participants came and went to look at the different exhibition stands looking at the things

they had made but not seen for a few weeks. The group seemed pleased with the way the exhibition had been arranged. However it was their own work which captured their attention in the main.

On the weekend of the opening event, the community workshops were held at the centre. It had been agreed that Ruth would run a flower making workshops, her own suggestion. Others would help with painting canvasses, and planting seeds. Charlie would be decorating horseshoes.

None of the group had been to the centre before, despite the fact that it is situated only 5 miles away from where they live.

In addition to the participants who came to help, the workshops were attended by over 60 people from the local community, only a few of whom ascribed to Gypsy heritage. The flower making workshop was by far the most popular activity with visitors. It was Ruth who mainly facilitated this activity throughout the day as people came to join in, and Nancy came to help when the session became busy. Ruth and Nancy explained to their audience that making paper flowers was a traditional craft that Gypsy women would engage in, and the finished items would be sold door to door. They explained that in those days, fresh flowers were only available in the spring and summer months, and artificial flowers were not widely available; these paper flowers would be the only source in the winter months, so they were popular forms of decoration.

The artworks which partcipants produced, are symbols of energy, commitment and achievement, fostering a sense of pride (Voluntary Arts Network, 2005). Although participants were not directly involved in the continued analysis of the data, emergent themes were discussed and checked with participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Reflection on Len's funeral
12 July 2017

Len had died at the age of 57, having been ill for a few weeks – since being evicted from their home, he had not engaged at all with the local GP or health visitors and his diabetes had gone untreated for several weeks. Despite the community workers' best efforts to enable him to work with health practitioners, it was as if he had given up on life – he hated living where he did in this town, 22 miles away from the home he had been in most of his life.

I knew the funeral would be attended by a number of people and Lou and I had decided to go together. As we arrived, Ruth was walking down the road – I thought she was probably going to the little church. She called us over, telling us that Charlie had allowed Len's body to be brought to his house for the wake so that he could, as she said 'come home'. She asked us to come with her to say Goodbye to Len. I was unsure and reluctant to do this, as Lou and I were the only people who were not part of the Gypsy community, and it felt like we were intruding on something very private. She was adamant that she wanted us to come with her.

We arrived at Charlie's house where a large crowd had gathered outside. Alfie had a trolley on which there were dozens of floral tributes which he was taking form the house to the church. Although there was a quiet atmosphere, people greeted us pleasantly and said a few words as we passed them.

The coffin was still open, and there was a line of people waiting to pay their respects – Len had been dressed in a suit and was wearing his cap. Some of his possessions were in the coffin with him. I had never seen anything like this before and was surprised at the quiet order of the proceedings. After we had filed passed, we went outside and waited with the crowd to go to the church. The undertakers then arrived and with swift expertise, they took out the large

window in the front of the house and passed the coffin through. I was surprised at the skill Charlie demonstrated in fitting it back in again. Once the coffin was in the hearse and the window reinstated we all then followed the hearse on foot, up past where Len had lived and back down the road toward the church. There was a huge group of people – Len was clearly a popular man. I noticed that some of the young men were videoing the procession on their phones as they walked along – one of them said he was posting this 'live' on social media for those who were unable to attend.

The ceremony was much like Chrissie's – the same hymns and a similar scene with the men all waiting outside, and the congregation being virtually all women sitting inside. After the ceremony Lou and I stood back from the group as the coffin was then lowered to the ground. Ruth was a sad, lonely figure, standing there on her own and I wondered how she would manage. Again, we were then invited to look at the flower tributes, which the women had made. As Lou and I left, Ruth asked us for some money saying she couldn't get home and needed a bus and a train to get back. This may have been an example of her opportunist nature, as she knew that we would help her in one way or another.

Analysis

In the time of the project – from June 2016 – July 2017 – there had been three deaths, all of them involving people under the age of 60. This is significantly lower than the national average and replicates the findings from other research. Ruth told us that several of the community had sat up all night with the body, while the men sat outside, telling stories and talking about their memories of Len.

Cohen argues that communities are best approached as 'communities of meaning' and that they provide a sense of belonging and attachment to the members (Cohen, 1982). In this way, '" community" plays a crucial symbolic role in generating people's sense of belonging' (Crow and Allan 1994: 6). Having a sense of belonging and experiencing relationships of trust that are involved, brings significant benefits (Putman, 2000). Belonging to the community suggests the members have something in common with each other – their Gypsy identity - and the thing held in common distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other possible groups – this is the case with the way that the Gypsy community celebrate death (Cohen, 1982). Although their practices may be similar to other groups – such as the sitting with the dead for the wake for example – this specific Gypsy community, celebrate death, and grieve for their dead in a way which is similar to other Gypsy groups:

- It is their tradition to hold a wake, the celebratory event is similar, with traditional hymns and the men group together and separate themselves from the women.
- The women are the ones who prepare the body, organize the flowers, arrange the sitting with the dead and notify relatives and friends.
- Although the window of Charlie's house was taken out to let the coffin through, there is also a Gypsy custom where the windows of the house are opened as the coffin leaves, so that the spirit of the person is free to leave
-

With this particular group, poverty and isolation is apparent. There was no wake after the church for either ceremony and Ruth was unable to easily get home again. The support from community members in attending the wake and celebrating the death was evident, demonstrating that they pull together in times of adversity – differences which have arisen in life, appear to be buried with the dead person.

Interviews in date order

Interview questions

Tell me where you were born

What are your earliest memories growling up as a child

What were your experiences of school

What was life like for you as a young person

How has life changed for you as a Traveller

How does your family nark special occasions such as birth, marriage, death

Do you celebrate any traditions

What are the ways in which you earn/earnt a living

Are there traditional recipes that you cook – are traditional recipes important

How do you maintain Gypsy culture

Eileen aged 62
12/7/2016

Early life – tell me where you were born
Eileen was born in Holmsley in the tin huts – it was known as 'tin town.' When she was three she moved into the compound. She recalls that life was happy there and she has good memories. All the families were there – and they would look after one another – there was a real sense of community. They would look after one another and their children would be able to play safely and people would look after home. It was like having one big family.

Despite the hard life- it was good. There were just 2 taps which they all shared and they would have to carry their water back and forth for cooking and washing etc. Men would go out together in their vans and lorries and the women would stay behind and the women would take out their baskets to sell flowers. They would pick flowers and berries of the day. 'Each season would bring a living – sloes, blackberries, chestnuts etc. '

'We would sell ribbon and lace which we bought from the factories – we would pick flowers and vegetables from the fields and would work in the fields for the farmers planting and picking vegetables. '

School
'I went to the little school in Thorney hill - which closed in 1979. They had two class rooms – first of all it had been a secondary school as well but then it became just primary and finally just infants. We were all taught together as a group. I then went on to the junior school in Bransgore; 'I wasn't as happy there I remember that I got picked on a lot. I was called names like dirty Gypsy, Gyppo. The Thorney hill school was fine it was the junior school which was the worst. Things were no better at Twynham. The kids would mostly leave us alone. I hated school. I only had friends that were Gypsies – apart from one who was as good as.'

I left there when I was 15 – other people wouldn't bother you really because they knew where you came from. My parents made me go to school and I wouldn't have gone if they hadn't. Because my mum was in a house at the time, I was made to go to school. If they had said I

didn't have to go I wouldn't have went one day. I didn't mix with the kids who weren't Gypsies but I had one friend who wasn't a Gypsy but was as good as one. It was very divided. Mum and dad moved into Brick lane when I was 7.'

'Other people wouldn't mess around with you. You weren't treated fairly if you didn't learn, you didn't learn. I learnt more when I left school. Like maths, I've learnt maths as I've got older - I can work it out for myself now. If you didn't learn, like I say you were left to get on with it. The work was put on the board and you had to get on with it – that was it. You didn't get no help even if you couldn't do it. The teachers didn't treat us badly really because they knew your mum would be up at the school, like my mum and a couple of other friends' mums did. If there some stuff that was going missing then you'd get the blame. Always. My mum would come up the school – not just my mum all the mums. It made you feel awful when they said you'd done something you hadn't. They'd always turn to us as soon as something happened, and my mum would tell them that we would go out with the baskets and sell. We would do things honestly. They would always pick on us – it was awful. It made you feel awful because you were the first they would point the finger at. And it hasn't changed at all. A friend of mine came and stayed up the road in their caravan and when the left they made sure it was spotless – they even took photos – well another friend did, and she kept an eye on it. Then the gorgios filled it with rubbish; they chucked it there and scattered it as if the Gypsies had left it. I didn't like going to school cos of the way we were treated. We wouldn't get picked on because we could stand up for ourselves.

Yes we've always got bullying - my grandson is getting it at school, getting called a pikey and stuff. I just turn a blind eye now. The law don't treat you fair and even if we haven't been in the wrong you get treated as if they did. I've had loads of problems, not me but my family have. Once they know your background you don't get a chance.'

Support

The doctor and nurse Ann (a health visitor) were very good to us. They would help us so much. They would come out to the compounds and give us the vaccinations and that. They don't do this now. In everyday life we are always discriminated against – we still get it day to day. I just turn a blind eye – it's against the law. But the law don't treat you fair and you get treated as if you are wrong – and it's the same with the NF council – I could tell you a lot of stories about them. The council is still the same and people are still the same until they get to know you for a long time - once people get to know you they are all right. They know we are just people …just people like anyone else. Like I've always said there's good and bad in every clan. Whatever you are …race, creed colour, there's good and bad. The trouble is that the good ones get the stick for the bad ones. People call us dirty but we are cleaner than gorgios. We had to have a bath in front of the fire but we never went to school dirty. We never went to school dirty. And we never went without food either.

Work

'Mum would go out with her basket and dad would be out working. Mum and dad would be savvy – they would buy their bread when it was a day old and get fruit and stuff that was a bit damaged but just as good. They would have pheasants and rabbits - we would never go hungry. We'd cook outside on the fire. You don't get a chance now.

Life as a young woman

'When I left school I went to a factory where I was painting toy soldiers in Christchurch until I was 17. Then I went to the chicken factory - golden produce. There we were treated just the same as everyone else. That's where I met my husband Dave… he was a gorgio but my parents accepted him in the end and he fell in with all our traditions - my parents didn't like it at first but gradually they accepted him. I was married at 16. We've been married for 47 years. It's a load of rubbish that women stayed in the house. How could they go call out with their basket – and dad would go out with his grinding barrel – with scented bark, daffodils and

other flowers…a bit of lace and sell it waxed flowers and she would weave her baskets. My mum could turn her hands to anything, mats baskets, hats, flowers, pegs wooden baskets – she would be out in the farm from day to night because she had to support the family, sometimes I would stay at home to look after the younger ones and do the dinner and that'

'Nothing will change – we can get called a pikey and a dirty gypsy and the police don't do nothing. But the police don't care and yet if you called a black person a nigger or a black sod and if you say that the police are straight there - but what is a the difference –they were born and live and die the same as us –what's the difference. The police don't see us as human beings, they see us as dirt and treat us like dirt….were just dirt and dogs under their feet. We're human beings at the same as the rest.'

'People only see what they want to see. I've been in a council house since 1976 and I never had any trouble with the neighbours apart from once. '

Mbfgw TV programme

'That's not any truth in that program - we haven't got money like that ….I like that paddy bloke and I voted for him but we haven't got money like him, we've had to struggle all our life. It was better in the past. It's all a load of rubbish and not how travellers live. It was all Irish Travellers and it was all for show and it was wrong. A true traveller will not tell people what they have or don't have, they keep it secret. I love being outside though – even in the winter. The thing is people believe what they hear - all these TV programmes get it wrong.'

Gender roles and work

'The traditions are dying out. You can't trade at all now – you can't pull in and stop yond be shifted on – not even just in the school holidays

You can't go calling and go out with your calling basket or your grinding bowl these days. And yet we know how to do it. There will be no jobs now … the farms have machinery and they have taken over. There is no scrapping now…..you can't do it, scrapping is the last thing left, you can't do these jobs now. They aren't any of that sort of work but they will have to sign on as there is nothing else. It won't be long until it's completely died out. We will all have to stay put here as there's nowhere to go. It will die out in the end… people won't employ you once they know who you are. It will turn back to how it used at be. People will try and start up again –it will be so expensive people won't be able to live like we do. I could travel again, Buster could too, but my daughters wouldn't be able to manage traveling they wouldn't cope with it'

Food

'In the old days we walked everywhere together it was healthy. We had plain food potatoes mutton, bacon vegetables, joey grey. Dad was 63 and mum was 73 when she died .'

Traditions

'Things have changed and the traditions have gone but family are still the most important thing. Some people think they are better than us so they don't call themselves Gypsies. They don't want to be known as Gypsies because they think they are above it, not because of discrimination.'

'Gypsy identity is still important – some younger ones don't want to carry on with the traditions. When I first moved into a house I didn't pass those traditions on to my children. Then when my mum died I realised how important it was and I started teaching them.'

Nancy aged 43
12/7/2016

Tell me where you were born
I was born in the house I live in now, in the village .

Identity
I believe that I live in a close community and being housed together is a reason why we still have our Gypsy identity. I call myself a Gypsy as I don't travel. Im a Gypsy – the most hated culture of all. My ancestors were immigrants. In the old days you could be killed for being a Gypsy.

I have always known that I was a Gypsy as we were brought up like that from birth. Many of my family lived on Gypsy sites. Some still do.

I could never understand why people would be unkind or pick on us like they did. I didn't know any difference - non Gypsy children would call us names such as ' dirty Gypsy' but we were cleaner than the others at school. We use other language sometimes, which I would identify as being different. Everyone would know us as they knew the particular area where we lived which was known as a Gypsy community. There were buses provided for school but there was a Gypsy one and another one for all the children. I felt more comfortable on the Gypsy one.

Food
We always had a cooked meal for tea whereas the others would have sandwiches. We always had this as a family and after tea there would be a treat. As children we came first whereas with my gorger friends' parents were not like that. So for example we never had a bedtime. We had a lot of freedom as we were allowed to roam.

I remember that we used to go potato picking every season as a whole community to earn money. My granny made us a bender to sleep in one year as we were further from home that time and we stayed in there. I didn't like school and would prefer to stay at home any time.

We are extremely fussy with our food and other people touching it. Whoever makes the food we eat has to be known and to be clean.

Family
My mum is a Gypsy but my dad is a gaudje. So my maiden name is not a typical Gypsy name – however I married a Gypsy boy so it is now. My dad's family would not accept that he married a Gypsy so we never had anything to do with our grandparents.

Traditions
Because they don't travel now the community like to change the decor in their house. The community like bright colour and things and sparkle. Many people like to decorate their graves with artificial flowers and bright things.

Weddings are different because we always invite everyone and we don't expect RSVP. We always do lots of food to cater for everyone. Our weddings are all about family and are informal. The children are once again included and are expected to celebrate with us.

Members of the family will do the flowers and they usually have lots of experience in doing it. At these events drink is important too – my dad makes cider and beer –many families come together and help. My gran would never turn any of us away and she would often have a full house with sometimes there would be as many as 12 of us round the table.

Traditions are changing and dying out – for us it's because our gran died. It's gone out the window. I feel we are still a strong community – still a quite connected community

Births
No men were allowed inside the room and they would wait outside. They would wait until the baby was born.

Death
All the family come together at this time. Whatever happens, even if people have fallen out, this will always be put to one side. It is normal in this community for the body to come home at least for one night whilst the family stay with the body. The men usually stay outside and sit together around a fire. The women sit inside; usually the body is in another room and people go in and out and to spend time with them.

Many will have their photographs and special personal belongings in with them. Anything else is often destroyed. This can even include their curtains. Flowers are very important and are made with meanings, such as things that they loved. This might be a family cross, a scratch card, packet of fags.

There will be a big photo with flowers etc around it. The men usually stand outside the church whilst the women and children go in – again children are very much included.

Heritage
My heritage makes me a Gypsy – for example I was married at 16 years old. We like traditional Gypsy food –joey grey rasher pudding etc. We always used to make holly wreaths and sell them but you can't do that now without a licence and it isn't really worth it. We do make them for family. We still like making wreaths – have a wake – it's all about family

I didn't want to be a Gypsy when I was little. I didn't really understand it. But since I have become older, I have done a lot of reading and that and realised …..like at school you are taught about the Jews and what they went through, in the holocaust, but you weren't told how many Gypsies died. That's something I've learnt as an adult by myself. And now I'm proud to be a Gypsy.

Paul was expelled from school which was due to him being a Gypsy. My son embraces his Gypsy culture more than his sister. Both of them are proud to be Gypsies.

Life as a young woman
As a young girl I didn't have my hair cut. In my day you went courting and that before you got married – you didn't live together. I had to get permission to get married and then I moved in with my gran. There was no way I would have been allowed to live with my boyfriend – no way at all. So we got married. It would have been a disgrace while nan was alive. Nan thought it was right for us to get married and not live together. You couldn't just have loads of boyfriends.

I remember when I was sixteen I wanted to go out with my friends to a club and my mum said I had to take my nan with me.

Because when I was brought up in our family it was mainly females and because of this the women are more dominant. My nan could turn her hand to anything. Whereas in Buster's *(Jenny's husband)* family his father is really dominate. Buster will clean and cook unlike his father. He prefers to be at home rather than working but he has to go to work.

School
I went to school until I was 16. I hated school. I was very naughty about school. I'd put the alarms back and everything. I wouldn't go to school. I'd get Rose into trouble too. I had the welfare on my back.

What did you do when you weren't at school? I used to just hang around. Walk to Christchurch and stuff like that. I left in the last year of school because I had a job.

My son used to be called names as well. We bring our kids up to stick up for themselves. Cos it's a case of having to – no one else is going to. My daughter didn't really – not until the last year. She made this booklet about being a Gypsy, and she took it into school. From then on things changed and it was almost like she was getting blamed for things. For things she would never do. I did actually go mad, cos they made her confess to something she didn't do. And it wasn't even a teacher – it was a teaching assistant. I said to my daughter look I know you didn't do it – it was something to do with a computer. The teaching assistant took her into a room on her own. went on and on at her and told her if she admitted it, then it would stop and if she didn't it would go on and on. At the time she was only about ten, so she admitted it. I could see she was upset when she came out of school and she told me what had happened. I had already spoken to the head about it so I went mad and demanded to speak to the teaching assistant about it. I was very upset because Milly was a quiet child, and she had never been in trouble before; the head phoned and apologised. But it took two weeks for that to happen.

Why did you hate it so much?
I wasn't very academic at school. We were picked on at school. Not really picked on as I am not really the sort of person who would be picked on. But we were called names and that. Always dirty Gypsy …I don't know why this was cos our clothes were always clean and usually better than the other kids. We always had new school clothes to go back in. But we were always called dirty Gypsy and stuff like that.

I did know non-Gypsy children but most of my friends were Gypsies. Because we stick to our own community.

What about the teachers – did they treat you differently?
Not that I noticed really. I had a really good tutor at school. He was so nice. He used to phone mum and let her know if I was not there. I just didn't want to be there.

Jane asked: "In what ways?"

Nanacy "Well ……er …he always carries his catapult, goes coursing he wears his rings and all his friends are Gypsy boys. I'm a Gypsy – the most hated culture of all. My ancestors were immigrants. In the old days you could be killed for being a Gypsy."

Interview with Mary in her home
4/8/2016

Mary was interested in my research, and asked to meet with me. Mary is a Romany Gypsy and is a fortune teller. I have worked with her in the past and have known her for several years. Her husband was an active advocator for Gypsy rights and made several presentations at conferences etc. He died in 2010.

Some of the New Forest people are not Gypsies. During the After the second world war a lot of people came to live there and they ended up living there with the Gypsies . Theresa man called Matt Sears who has written a book about it. He did some research about 7 years ago – did you know that some of the Coopers failed the DNA test to see if they were Gypsies. The Forest lot are uncouth lot of people. They have no manners. Their children are out of control – I've met with the families at events and their children are out of control. The way they dress is not how we dress. They try to behave like Gypsies but they aren't. Even when they do try to do traditional things, it is not right. For example, when they make their rasher pudding, they

don’t make it right. Their children are always badly behaved - stealing etc. Gypsies nowadays are more modern; they don’t live in the past like they do. They don’t do things properly.

It seems as well that there is a lot of drugs going on with young people. This is getting more and more common. It’s worrying. For instance, there are a lot of people on facebook who want to try to be Gypsies – it’s getting very common now.

There are two classes of people – poor and wealthy and the two don’t mix with one another – n o they don’t. There are different classes of Gypsy. Most have to get used to living in a house. I have but then my house is my own. We know from the research that Kenny (her late husband) comes from royal stock down the line.

My husband’s funeral
I arranged the funeral to be in the traditional way. I promised him I would do this. I asked the people in the cul de sac if they would mind and they said no. I told them there would be a lot of people there and that they would be coming to the house. They were ok about it – some of them were invited. I wanted to do the tradition al thing – you know I wanted him at home with me here. So we got a big gazebo and put it next to the house round through the gates so that they could get in. And then we put lots of chairs round so that the men could sit and talk and tell stories and the women did the sitting up. We did the flowers ourselves. It was a lovely send off – the church was full – over 400 people came.
I still miss my Tony. He was the love of my life.

Interview with Rose aged 45
18/10/2016

Tell me about where you were born
I was born in the village in a house. I’m the oldest of two daughters, and my parents later adopted 3 girls, (Rose’s biological cousins) when I was 17 years of age. I remember it being a happy time and I was happy to help my mum. I feel it helped her to prepare for when I had her own children.
We were always brought up as 'Gypsies' - the whole family except dad are Gypsies - and he has always been 'like one of them'.

Identity
Gypsy heritage is important to the family because …….I don't know really. Because we are all one community and it is part of who we are. We knew all our lives - mum used to make traditional things.
Our grandad (Granfer) Stanley Doe, would go out with his barrow - he was a grinder. He had his regular customers . Grandma would make pegs and he would sell them on his rounds.’
From a young age, Rose said she and her sister would make holly wreaths - 'you can't do this nowadays. I remember we would go and pick flowers from the downs in Salisbury - dad would drive us and we'd pick snowdrops and cowslips. Gran would make paper flowers to sell in the winter.’

They are really happy memories - I wish the kids (meaning her own) could have experienced what we did, especially as they are boys - they would have loved it.
We used to go potato picking - all of us would go together - lots of us from the community.
We've always known we were Gypsies. We always used to visit our family who lived on a site. We were the only ones who didn’t live on a site.’
‘Granfer and Granny were the sort of people who kept themselves to themselves. The others moved from the compound but they didn’t want to.’
Jane: Did you feel different?

Rose: 'No not personally. When I was with my own, I was one of them. But I mixed easily. Others used a different language. Those who lived on the sites spoke a different language so we learnt some of it. Learnt it and forgot it as time has gone by.'

What sort of work can a Gypsy Traveller do?
Any sort of work. It doesn't matter what jobs people do. Most people in the community do house clearances, scrapping, gardens. You do get the odd ones who go and work in factories. But most people I know do garden maintenance …..oh and caring jobs as well.

School
'I didn't tell anyone at school I was a Gypsy - cos I lived in a house and talked like them on one grasped. Mum always dressed us in clean clothes - so no one knew. And no one ever asked. I mixed with all the kids – Gypsies and non Gypsies.
'We didn't want people to look down on us, thinking we were dirty and thieves. Even though it wasn't true, people had a preconceived idea of what they thought Gypsies would be like. So, school was OK for me….I think I faded into the background. I had friends and it was a good experience.
I must admit I did the same with my boys. Then someone turned up at my door because my kids names were put on a list - a list of Gypsy kids at school. No one had asked permission. I sent him away, telling him he wasn't right. I went and saw the head. I was annoyed because I felt it was my choice to say who they were.
On the odd occasion they've had problems, things like name calling. It didn't bother them too much because they are very outspoken. They are not intimidated by things. If you get a child that really withdrawn and quiet then you are more likely to have problems. Most of my son's friends are not Gypsies,

Then I started coming to these groups –and then I started changing. You can't make a difference if you don't say who you are. My kids are so proud now of who they are.

Heritage
I used to do talks and it helped because the kids were getting into trouble and I felt it would help. The school do teacher training there so I went to do a talk for them. This was round about the time of My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding, and I wanted to put things straight. I wanted to get the message right. The women don't just sit at home and look after the children. And we want our kids to go to school – it's better for them.

To be fair, the head had started to change his views and embraced the fact that there were so many children in the school. Then Jane got some funding in to help *(Jane said: I'd forgotten that I did that!)*
Things started changing when the Forest Bus came to the school. That's when things got better for the kids.'

'There are always people that will judge you and the TV programmes make us look bad and they don't portray us right….I've known Gypsy people all my life and I've never known anyone to leave school before 16. We do get married young – we weren't allowed boyfriends, we were protected. It's not the same now– it would be if my grandma was still alive. When we were young, people were sheltered. Times are changing – it's much easier on the kids now. Easier for them to mix with other young people.'

What about drug use?
'You're going to get that everywhere. In my day you didn't even hear about them. Some of them get them from certain people. It's because they have to fit in. It's good living here because there are so many of the community, they have plenty of people to talk to. It's like living on a site. There are plenty of people to talk to.'

Bullying
When my son was 10, he went in to the park. There were other kids there who started to tease him – they were about 14/15. Jake stood his ground and said I'm proud of who I am'. He ended up by being knocked to the ground and had to go to hospital. We had to press charges but the police didn't take it seriously. They don't seem to care unless it's the Gypsies who they blame. The police aren't helpful – they only see it one way.

Life as a young woman
I had a lot of friends. I got married at 19 years of age. It wasn't accepted to live with someone then and my parents were very strict – as was my nan.
It's wrong the way people think we clean all day – it's not what we do anyway. We didn't have to leave school and suddenly take over the cleaning. We did our chores like anyone else. My kids do nothing!

How has life changed for you?
'I'm more confident now – all these groups have been an influence on me –the book 'a time forgotten' which we helped with - all this and getting older has helped with confidence.' Ann said she helped with the book and it was her who thought of the title.

'Life is better now, I would never admit I was Gypsy. We've always mixed but never talked about it to people outside. The groups do help. I feel safer with people around me and confident because there are so many of us. I feel that my kids could go to any of the neighbours if they needed help.'

'In 1991 there was a gate in the school – Gypsy kids on one side and others on the other side. This is what made Elise start the play group – parents wouldn't send their kids if there were Gypsy and Traveller children there. Elise brought her children up at the same time and felt her children were treated differently by the school.'

I witnessed something not long ago with my nephew. We were over at the pub because there had been some trouble. It wasn't all his fault but the police officer said to my sister 'Oh we've had a lot of trouble from you. The Coopers! And they've never had any trouble with our family. It is just because of her name that they said that. So I have witnessed a few little problems like that. That was discrimination in itself – my sister reported it but never heard a thing.

Food
'Certain things were different. We were brought up on rasher pudding, joey grey, soups and stews. We still do this now. Mum showed us how to make rasher pudding.'

Celebrations
'Funerals – it is customary for us all to be together.'
I asked if there is a preference for the men to stay outside of the church, which I had witnessed myself countless times at funerals in various Gypsy communities. Rose replied: 'people come together and they haven't seen each other for a long time so sometimes they may spend time talking outside.' Rose said she didn't know if this was a custom or not.

She added: 'In my Grandma's day we used to go to the church for 3 weeks after the funeral. We would always wear black and we would mourn for a year. '

Names
'The children don't have traditional Gypsy names now days. A lot still have the surnames which are in the old books – Doe, Cooper, James etc.' Rose said she still does floristry, but when she needs to – like for a funeral.

‘Just because you don’t live in Pakistan doesn’t mean you are not a Muslim.’

Bob Aged 44
11/10/2016

Bob is one of 5 children 2 boys and three girls.

Memories as a child.
When I was 9 or 10, I was sent away to a care home with my brother and sisters. We were sent there because my parents didn’t want us. I think that was just for a few months and then we went back again. I feel that I wasn’t treated properly by the people who were supposed to be looking after us.

School and work
We lived in the house with our family before moving to a caravan on a site. I remember I liked it there - it was much better then living in a house. I remember that that there was much more freedom – I didn’t have to go to school – well I did go sometimes but I was expelled at the age of 13. I think that it was about wearing red socks but I guess it was probably more than that. I wasn’t called Pikey cos that’s a newer thing but I was called the usual – Cacker, Gypo. I never went back after that. Eventually, but I can’t remember exactly when, we moved from the caravan back to a house in Thorney Hill. Granfer gave up his house for us to move into. I don’t remember much about this but I knows Granfer came from Shave Green. When I was 13 I started working on the local tip.

Traditions
I learnt all the traditions from Jenny (His wife) and from her family. My family didn’t teach me at all. I didn’t even know when Christmas was as a young child – I don’t have happy memories of my parents, and we don’t speak event though they live nearby. It was when I moved in with Jenny’s gran that I learnt things like how to make holly wreaths. One of my aunts – Aunt Louie - also taught me some things and also helped look after us. I learnt how to do the holly wreaths from her.

Food
I remember they would eat traditional food from the land - such as pheasants, rabbits, even sheep sometimes.

Identity
Like I said, when I did go to school I recall being called names such as Gypo, Cacker, etc. It took me 20 years to get a ‘good name’. When I was young I would ‘chore’ (steal) a lot. I had no money and had to live - it was small stuff that I stole but I had no alternative. I think I was quite bad looking back. I had a hard childhood, very hard –my family live near me , but I don’t speak to them or have anything to do with them. We never had birthdays, Easter or Christmas. We never ever got a birthday present from our parents.

I always thought my son should follow the traditions to earn a living. Like scrapping, gardening – but he hasn’t done yet.

Joe 62
18/10/2016

Tell me about where you were born
I was born in the compound and grew up in a bender and lived with my family which was my

mum and dad and 5 siblings, so there was 8 of us in the bender. The bender just used to get extended as more of us moved in.

What are you earliest memories growing up as a child?
There were many other Gypsy Travellers also on the compound and we were one community. There was a stream nearby and there was also a field which had a bomb hole, which filled up with water and we used to go swimming in it. I saw deer rabbits and all sorts of wild life all the time, that was the natural normal surroundings for us and I loved it. We used to make huge dens and big hills made out of leaves, we entertained ourselves for hours playing. The water was got from the streams and once a week the water was boiled up and we would have a good all over bath.

The black pot was constant with stew type food always being cooked. There was a big circle with the pot in the centre we all used to sit round that and it was wonderful. Everybody looked out for everybody else and we worked together as a community. If a kid stepped out of line another person in the compound would soon tell them, you never had to worry about your kids.

My mum would boil everything, all our clothes, I never had any shoes and my feet were as hard as nails and I loved it. I can't remember any celebrations or anything when we lived there, life was really hard, not just because we were Gypsy's but also because there were rations, however we were always okay as we still did our coursing every day and caught our own food, we still do that today.

Family
My mum was a farm girl and uneducated, my dad was a chef in the army but also had not had any education. I loved the benders and remember how warm they were and cosy, a sheet would be put at the opening with the fire just inside which kept it really lovely.

I lived like this until I was about 7 years old, I think then they didn't want people living on compounds so came in and changed it all. My memories of this were that they took us children first. I remember waiting by the road, there is a bus stop there now and some cars came. Someone took a photo of us, I got put in a car with my sister and was taken to a children's home at Abbey Wells. My memory is not very good, but I do remember that we did not all go together and that when I got to the children's home I was so scared. All I had ever known was the compound and that life. I remember stairs and feeling so scared, I had no idea what they were, the water coming from a tap which I thought was some sort of magic and the electric, I could not understand the electric. It was a different world and very scary and hard, however eventually you get used to it and have to try to adapt.

My parents at this time must of remained in the compound for a while and eventually moved to another area and were given a caravan where they stayed until the house that the council were building were ready

I don't know how long I was in the children's home for, I think a couple of years and then I was allowed to go back and live with my mum and dad. They were the first tenant to be in a proper house and I still remember the address, it was a three bedroomed house. Not long after I moved home my dad passed away of cancer, I don't remember my dad, if he walked in the room now, I would never recognize him.

Values
I remember then we were left to our own devices to live a normal life in a house when we had no clue what to do. As I said my mum was uneducated and did her very best, but had no idea how to live in a house.

Things changed, I was persecuted for being a Gypsy, ignored by teachers, shouted out and ignored by non-Gypsy people. As kids, we were never allowed in people's houses as they thought we would pinch things and call us dirty gypsies. I was not dirty my mum boiled my clothes all the time and did her best, but my clothes never fit properly or looked nice, we didn't have an iron or anything like that. I used to get embarrassed about my clothes, my mum however was a very direct woman and never worried about what others said.

We were not treated like normal people, they put us in a normal environment in houses with no help and no one treated us as normal. We were a community in houses and people called it Netley Zoo.

I believe, "If you hit a dog enough, it will eventually bite you back"

That's how we were treated, we retaliated, people thought we were bad so we behaved like it, although my mum used to go mad and hit us with the broom.

School

Mum sent us to school, but we wouldn't go. One day we were sent in and when we got there we were punished for skiving, we were 'caned', me and my best friend. The punishment didn't hurt as we were hard as nails now anyway. We ended up going straight out of school and running down lanes and over fields, we found a house with a garage with a window open, no one was there, we climbed through the window, found a bottle of whisky and drank it and got a bit drunk. We heard the (gavvers) so we ran and got stuck in the bog and I lost my shoes. We were taken to the police station. I was off the rails by now, I had become a really fast runner and if I saw something I wanted I would take it and just run.

We went to Winchester and I remember my mum bringing me a pair of shoes. They then got put to Kingwood Classifying school which was like a borstal and from there went to an approved school called Eagle House, which was like a mansion but a borstal.

The head mistress here was brilliant she was really hard but was fair, you learnt that if you behaved you would be rewarded which I liked. We used to get shoe checked and bed checked and everything.

Work

My first job I got was a paper round, but again I was naughty as I used to just throw them in a bush or over a hedge, I would go and get my money, but because I was always getting into trouble and had fines that I had to pay, so I never actually got any money. Eventually I got fired from my paper round.

At around 14 years of age I started to help build the trellis on buildings. At 22 I started working in a blanket factory which I hated so much, I hated being shut in that factory. I then ended getting a job with contracting work laying pipes for cables and worked on the Isle of Wight laying pipes, I enjoyed this and started to teach myself to read and write. I went to the refinery and was able to read the blue prints, I was quite intelligent really, I don't know why or how I could do this but I could and others could not. I went into the railways and started out as a Junior, senior and then the head shunter, I used to help put all the trains together. I then went to work in a refinery and ended going to University, studying the health and safety, I passed the St Johns ambulance and did a management course, I became the union representative, I did struggle because I couldn't spell. I did this for 10 years until I became progressively unwell.

Health

When I was in the approved school I always had a problem with one of my ears. I started feeling unwell and off balance and my memory was being affected. I went to the doctor and they told me that I needed to have an operation there and then otherwise I would die. I had

something inside my ear which was eating away and that is why I was having the problems I had. I now have an ear made out of pig skin and they operated and made the problem better, but I was left with the problem with my balance and memory problems. I was not allowed to go back to my work, it was too dangerous.

I haven't worked for 27 years now.

Identity
With my own children I have been married twice. With my first marriage I had a son, who I am just so proud of, although me and my first wife were Gypsy travellers, we did not want to bring up our child like a Gypsy. We wanted him to be educated and be like non Gypsy people so he could get on in life. I was really hard on him, but he has done well.

I re married and had a daughter, again I married a Gypsy traveller and this time we have brought our daughter up to live and access both worlds. She has known the traditional side of the Gypsy travellers and spends time with the family and community, however she is pushed into education and living in the other world. I wanted my children to be educated; I believe that by being educated you will have opportunities and a life. I did not want them to have my life, to be poor, to be called the names and be treated like me.

How have things changed
I don't think it is the same as it used to be, there is not the same stigma there that we had, people understand more now and kids are not bullied in the same way. They don't have to live in compounds anymore, they do have the choice to be educated and make something of their lives now. Given the choice of how I felt and the memories I treasure, I would go back to the life in that compound any day, the freedom, no responsibility a simple life. We don't have a choice now you have to live like they have made us even though we may not want to.

Interview with Lottie - 19 year old Female
18/10/2016

Identity
I would like to say that my opinion on Gypsy Traveller people is that we don't all live in caravans but just live differently. Our homes and gardens will be decorated differently with bright colours, often artificial flowers, vases, ornate things such as mirrors, horses and china. The china and ornaments also will represent the gypsy life with the Bow Top Caravans and horses on them. Our rugs that we lay down are usually brand stamped and we have colourful bling cushions. The children are dressed well, with the girls in frilly over the top dresses and the boys often in caps, we as girls like to have our hair long and it is not cut when we are young. We also like to have our babies ears pierced when they are born, however this seems that it may be a problem in the future as they are now saying babies cant have them pierced until they are 3 months old, we have always done it and it is not right that we cant. Babies have embroidered beautiful blankets etc.

Many Gypsy Traveller like brands, they like to wear (even if they are copies) the DandG, Coco Chanel, MacKenzie etc and like to have a lot of bling. Also another thing is the gold, if you are able to afford it, Gypsys love their sovereign rings, their hoops and chains. We like the rag dolls, Catapults, Boxing Gloves and Big Dummys.

Our language is also different, we talk differently when we are altogether and use different words. We have learnt two different worlds, one when we are out and one when we are at home.

We know we are Gypsy travellers, we never question it, it is just the way it is, we are just brought up to know and will tell kids from our community when they are little, they are a gypsy kid, that is just normal for us.

I have always felt so much luckier than non Gypsy girls as I have always been given what I wanted, it is all about the kids and you don't have to have Christmas or a birthday to have what you want.

How have things changed
We can't do the things we used to do. I remember going out with my dad coursing when I was a kid. And we used to sell the rabbits – sometimes we'd pick flowers and mushrooms to sell. I loved being out in the countryside – you can't do these things now

We don't have a choice now in how we live – we are cooped up.

Interview with Primrose
28/10/2016

Tell me where you were born
Primrose was born in the city 16/4/72 in hospital. She is the oldest of three siblings, I sister and 1 brother. They lived in the city on an estate.

Her dad was born in 1947 –her parents were married in 1972.

Primrose comes from a big family – her nan and grandad had 9 children – in 1998 there were 38 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

Some of the family have married into the Gypsy community

Tell me about your family
Her grandparent's lived in a nearby town. They were originally living in the New Forest. She was moved into a house from her Vardo. Primrose called her 'nanny 'B'. After she moved she put her wagon and horses in her garden and Primrose has very happy memories of visiting her there. She can remembers sitting on the step of the wagon outside and playing out side the wagon – she was not allowed inside the wagon as this was considered sacred. The wagon was full of traditional decorations and – she remembers the house being really cold and bare.

Her own mum grew up to keep this side of her life very private in terms of her heritage. Her own parents were very strict and her dad fulfilled the patriarchal role - he was the man of the house. Yet her grandparents didn't mind her marrying outside the Gypsy community. All the kids were married or had left home by the time they were 16 years of age.

Primrose did not know much about her own mum's life. Her aunt lived on a site until this closed down and she was moved inti a house. Although Primrose didn't go to see her on the site, she knew a lot of people who lived on the site. She got on well with them and played amongst them with no problem.

Primrose remembers the house being immaculate- she remembers family meals rasher pudding and stews. She was brought up to keep the house clean with her sister – her mum was very strict about that. She remembers her grandad used to hang rabbits.

Her brothers would go coursing but her mum didn't like rabbits being in the house. She wouldn't cook rabbit either. Her mum has recently adopted a child who had been removed from an extended family member. Primrose said it was a kinship adoption and that her mum gone through a rigorous process to be approved.

Primrose was always aware growing up that there were different cultures in the family. She was brought up to believe that family links are very important.

What are you earliest memories growing up as a child?
Primrose remembers living with her mum after her mum and dad split up. She remembers going for walks with her grandad. She was 4 at the time and they lived in a caravan park. Her grandad would walk over every day to see them – he kept his horses there. Primrose can recall learning to ride the horses and would ride them bareback. She also remembers being thrown off a horse into a gorse bush. Primrose loved the horses and looking after them.

She remembers her grandma boiling her washing in big silver pots. She also remembers she would wash her grandad's feet for pocket money. Primrose remembers her mum as always being busy cleaning and doing housework.

Everything was produced at home – and was grown in the back garden.

Celebrations
Funerals:-
These were very big celebrations – the body always came back to the house. The girls in the family would make the flowers. Primrose herself was brought up to learn how to do the flowers – she knows how to make the wreaths, how to make rasher pudding. They used to have fires outside the house and would sit around there playing cards, telling stories etc.

She can't remember big weddings – just the funerals. The first death of someone close to her was her granddad and this was her first experience of death. Everyone was close and they were very shocked. As a child you know from this that funerals were very important – it didn't matter how friendships were, all is forgotten in death. The women would get together to do the flowers and those who didn't know how, would learn how to do them.

The men would always gather in the garden and the women would do the refreshments and serve them – look after everyone. Her grandma taught her how to make them. She remembers how the house had to be kept very cold and all the flowers being in the bathroom. Her granddad Joseph died at 59 years of age. She woke on the morning of his 60th birthday in 1989. Everyone went to the house – they were many people there – lots of men who stayed in the garden. The body went to the funeral arrangers – then her words 'unlike the gorgers who don't do this – the body then comes back to the house'. A vigil is kept, with people from all over coming to join in and pay their respects. The girls in the family made the flowers.

When her nan died, the same thing happened. She had cancer – there was some discrepancy about her age. Primrose did her funeral flowers –the gates of heaven and an open book –to represent the bible. All of Primrose's aunts and uncles have had similar funerals, except for one who died in a house fire.

On her birth certificate, her mother's name was recorded as Wells. Primrose thinks this was recorded incorrectly – her Christian name was Coral not Carol – Coral according to Primrose is a more traditional Gypsy name.

The flowers were taken to the funeral on a flatbed truck.

Her mum doesn't keep the traditions, and she doesn't want to be buried in the same way. She wants to be buried in the woodland burial ground, the first break in traditions for generations. Her mum hides her heritage. Whereas her aunt has what Primrose calls icons in her home – horses, caravans – and her house is immaculate.

Identity
Grandma Priscilla
Grandma kept her dining room 'sacred' – the room would be kept locked and no one would go in there unless they had permission. The room was full of ornaments of horses, caravans, tapestries and pictures of those there were horse shoes.

I think this was like a heritage room which was kept, sacred to her.

My mum had a pantry and she would keep, rabbits and deer in there which were hung. They would be skinned and ready for cooking. The pantry would be full of hung animals. She would also rescue animals and cure them, letting them go when they were better. Primrose said she can remember a little grey squirrel called fifi – she would come into the house. There were always flowers in the garden and the door was always open.

When the council wanted to move her mum because the houses were due for demolition, she didn't want to move. She had her memories of living there and her extended family coming to the house.

Only her aunt Jessie lived on a site. She chose to move from a house onto the site until it closed down.

Traditions
I remember learning how to wire the flowers. I have more memories from my nan, grandad and aunt than from mum. From what I know mum had quite a poor upbringing –there was little money around. Nearly all the children thought that as soon as they were old enough they would make their own way in life, and better themselves. They were always aware that they were different and that there were different cultures within their family. They loved their grandad. Family links are very important to them all.

Primrose now works in a school and has a lot of Gypsy children with whom she works – she finds she is able to bond well with them. She has recently been working with a child w ho she has discovered is her second cousin. He finds reading and school work hard – he was quite difficult until he knew who she was, and now he will let her help him.

Extended family names in her family are Pearl, Rosie, Bridie, Josie. Primrose recently went on a holiday with some of Gypsy traveller women – it was the first time the men had let them go. She had a great time and felt very comfortable and safe with them.

What are traditional jobs
Primrose described these as Carpentry, tree felling. Physical work. Her own mum worked in the chicken factory. They would collect her from home and take her to work.

Her own children all left school at 16 - her daughter works in a supermarket and has just left home to move in with her boyfriend to be nearer work. Her eldest son has left home to study to be a paramedic at university – having studied as an adult to get his qualifications. Her youngest son is a trained game keeper. He has an arms licence and works for a local landowner. Primrose has frequently experienced game of all sizes (even deer) hanging in the garden. She has helped to skin them with her son. She commented that in this way he is keeping up some of the traditions

Sid 18/10/2016
Tell me where you were born
l was born at the compounds and lived there from 1932 to about 1941– I was born into a Gypsy family in 1922.

Tell me about your family

I was born in the old compound, it's still there, they've even left the bridle ways and there are four or five acres of trees. Well I was just born into a Gypsy family…as you are probably aware, I was born in 1922, I got called up to the army. The gavvers, I beg your pardon I mean the police, came and spoke to our mother and told her me and my brother would have to go in the army. She was only a little woman. So we went in the army, my brother he was killed. While we were away they closed the compound down in East Boldre because they needed to set up a place for a search light battery…allegedly, because we had our own water supply and everything so we were contained. And they built 64 houses …they call it East Boldre but it really is on the Montague Estate, it called Sweynes - lease. I think there were 64 houses. They built them in a square leaving about an acre in the middle of grass which was left for our horses and for sport facilities for the children. It was good for them – it's still there. As a matter of fact it was Lord Montague who said they needs somewhere for their horses…it about the size of a football pitch. Then, jumping ahead a few years, when we were given the right to buy our homes.

In our day, my day the police treated us with respect I can still remember the name of the old policemen who used to come down…it was PC Coombes. He was stationed at East end. And he always used to come in and had say if there's anything you want, he used to say if you need any help, he knew we was illiterate and that, if you need anything come and see us. If you did anything wrong – it wasn't written down in his book, he would hit you with his cape and had send you to your dad. Then your dada would give you a good smack – because he was cross we'd got caught doing something wrong – it was only minor stuff, like scrumming apples or something like that

The compound was on the road to the East End from East Boldre Post Office., past East Boldre School and allotments. When you get to open forest look over on the right hand side and you will see a clump of trees that was the compound. We never had a big family; there was five of us and Jenny the girl. I had four brothers and a sister, my mother had twenty one brothers and sisters but that was the era before me. You didn't have to worry about boys then. Down on our compound we had the Well's, Sherred's, Burton's, Rostigina's and the Smith's. There was six different families, we lived together in fact we lived next door to each other, we all lived within the confines of the wood. You couldn't see beyond the trees.

Values

From about the age of 8, I can remember that in the summer times we would go off on the Vardo – first of all we'd go to Kent for the hop-picking, then it would be pricking out and planting the seeds for the cabbages. We used to have the young cabbages to eat. Father would price the job – he'd go to a famers field – say it was 10 acres, there it is Jim, if you want all the spuds picked out he would say that's going to cost 10 shillings. He'd go at the end of the job and collect the money and put it in his waistcoat pocket. Then he'd give us a shilling each. The last thing we'd do is pick the spuds. Then after doing that you'd have enough money for the winter period. We used to burn wood not coal, so we used to use the offcuts form the woods, we never cut the trees down. When it was dark, we went to bed and got up when it was light. We used to cook on a primus stove, must of it we'd cook in an old cast iron pot on the open fire. Everything used to go into the pot, meat and all. Cabbage, spuds all would go into the pot.

Some people had torches and gas lanterns but we didn't.

My family came from this area – but my father he comes from a place called 'Burton Agness' in Scarborough. During the first world war, him and his brothers and that, never had no money so they all joined the army, like a lot of people did, he came down here and he met mother who lived there and they married in the Abbey, and course father settled down here. We always used to go up to visit his people and we did a research, traced it back and w ecouldn't find out

What are you earliest memories growing up as a child?
If I had a tummy ache or we were ill we always went to see Mrs. R, she would give us some liquid which probably tasted horrid but she managed to cure it. She was like the doctor old Mrs. R.

Course, two of her boy's went in the Army as well, I can remember them both. One got killed on a motor bike down road on the 'S' bend at Hand the other one, I don't know where he went. He was a tall smart, big fellow. They both were big and smart. He was in the guards and one day he brought his girlfriend home to the compound, I'll never forget it, if it was three hundred years ago I'd still remember, she couldn't get off it quick enough.

Mrs. R used to walk about the village pushing a pram and I asked her one day, "Mrs. R how are you?" and she said "I'm looking for old Bill". Her husband William had died about five years before.

In my younger days the only thing I was interested in was sport, girls and that didn't bother me at all. We used to go into town three or four of us at a time, to the pictures and one thing and another. There would be girls there but when it was over we didn't bother. I was always in the football and running.

School and Work
Every light hour we worked from about nine years old. Before that we had to run and get the water from the river or church yard. We had water all the year round because the stream ran through, which was lucky. When I was about twelve years old I remember picking turnips, potatoes and carrots and earning 6d a week. That's about 2.5p in today's money and I used to work from the sun up until sundown. Mother worked up until almost the day she died. She would go spud picking and the big ones used to go in the bag and the little ones were left to pick up after work to bring home. Now they ask a fortune for the little spuds.

I didn't ever go to school except when I was in the Army; I had one to one tuition. We used to go to the back of the village School and when the children were playing football, we used to jump over and play with them. Them were the days.

Life as a young man
Then of course they took us off into the Army and when we came back they had built the estate where I then lived. It was a housing estate of about sixty odd houses. It was built just for the Gypsies off the compound because they wanted to close it all down. In actual fact the estate is built on the Lord's Estate even though it was built by the Council. The houses were built with a good acre or more in the middle which was for us to put the horses for grazing. There are still Gypsy families living there.

Many people brought their houses when the right to buy came out. After two years people sold the houses and now it's like a private estate.

Basil, what do think has changed since those days?
When I was a child life was a hundred per-cent different to now …..it was better. Even though we used to sit on the floor as we didn't have any chairs. now and again someone would chore an old chair off the dumps. We used to make our bikes and go down the old tip and get frames and wheels and fill up the old tyres with straw. Especially during the war you couldn't get tyres and tubes. They were good days

I think it was Mrs Kitchener, I'm not sure, but we were spud picking down at Boyd's Farm and Mrs K went up to the end of the field to go to the toilet and came back with a baby in her arms. You know she had actually gone up and had the baby. Of course, the old farmer Boyd called the doctor but she went up and had a baby whilst she was there. Like I say they literally worked seven days a week whenever they could, I am sure that was Mrs K, but I can't

remember it was so long ago now I don't know if it was a boy or a girl, of course the other women went up and helped her and came up with a horse and cart.

Why do you think things were better?
Life was better then because we could trust each other, you could put a tenner in a bender or wherever and you could come back in a week's time and it would still be there and the door would be open to everyone.

You could earn a living even as a child …..everyone could earn money form the land. When Father used to go and price a job, say it was pricking out, he would give a price for the whole field, whether it was twenty or fifty acres he'd give a price, now we wouldn't draw any money until it was finished. Father would go and draw the money, it would be four or five pound, that's all and he would put it in his waistcoat pocket. At the end of the job he'd give us sixpence and he'd say don't spend that all at once. A sixpence was about the size of a five pence piece.

You could get a three pence bag of Smiths crisps, they were the only crisps that you could get the once pence bag of broken crisps but it didn't make much difference. A loaf of bread was only 1d or 2d, you could go to the pictures and it was 6d. For two shillings you could go into Lymington, have fish and chips, go to the pictures and still have change when you came out. It was 9d for the broken fish and 3d for the chips.

Celebrations

Christmas
At Christmas, our Christmas present was a pair of socks and an apple; there was no money about, if there was you were lucky. Come round Easter then Granny used to keep bantams and she used to give us a bantam egg each for an Easter egg. But we didn't know any different and that was great.

I think in our days it was because there was no money about, but nowadays they waste money, that's my opinion, I might be totally wrong.

We always had a fire at Christmas and a sing song; we always had meat and ate well, everyone mucked in. We had the Gorger people come down the compound and say "could you sell us some meat" because as you know it was all ration books, mother used to sell the clothing coupons to get food coupons and that sort of thing.

It's a different world altogether, I wouldn't say I'm stingy, it's the way I've been brought up I suppose. I mean the thing is I remember when my wife was alive and we had teenagers, let's say we had a double sheet and it got worn, I known her cut it in half, reverse it, stitch it and use it until it got holey, then cut it up and made it into pillow cases and when the pillow cases fell apart she would use the decent parts to make nappies for the babies and when they were all finished, if you could get a bit out, you'd make handkerchiefs. To me there's nothing wrong with that at all, I mean that would have been thrown out and gone and yet it's good enough for a handkerchief.

Surnames
My wife was a Gaudje and we were married in the village church. Many Gypsies jumped the broom stick and this is why you might get brothers and sisters with different surnames, ones taken the mothers name, one taken the father's name. You were given the choice, some weren't registered or christened, well if you're not registered non one knows. Our mum registered us and that's why the Gavver's came down and told us to join the army.

Age
Some Gypsies don't know how old they were because they were never registered. One lady I

know remembered being christened but doesn't know how old she is, her christening is her birthday but she could be five years older. There was no such thing as family allowance so basically what reason was there for registering?

Earning a living

We used to go scrumping, l used to go up the trees and put the apples in my shirt and of course being the last one out, the Gavver would be waiting outside the hedge and would tell you to go home and tell your dad who would be cross, not because you were out stealing apples but because you were caught!!

The main thing was trading horses which was about three times a year, they used to go to the Beaulieu Road pony sales twice a year, but again you see in my day there were more horses and cows on the forest then than there is now and quite often we'd go and chore one and they wouldn't be missed. Mother never said to us to chore anything, she would say we haven't got many spuds or no cabbage for the weekend and we used to go out and get the spuds, but she never ever said go out and chore anything, that was her way of telling us. What we used to do is go out in the middle of the field, dig out lots of spuds, because you get a root of spuds and that was enough, we didn't take anymore than that and we used to put the greens back in and the same as with a cabbage. We would go out and with a cow cabbage we would get it and cut underneath so the outside leaves would still be there and it would look like the cabbage was still there!!

This was years ago and I was up the New Inn and old the old farmer from Boyd Farm came up and a few of us men were talking and of course the old man came up and said 'You young buggers' 'you used to pinch my spuds and cabbage didn't you?' 'no not us Mr., ' yes you did and you used to put the greens back in and you thought I didn't know didn't you' and this was thirty years later and he knew all the time yet he never said anything, I bet they had had a good laugh over it.

Food

We used to have hedgehog, but we used to skin them not put them in clay like everyone says. You could wrap them in foil and cook them in the normal way. You skin them the same as a pheasant, you don't pluck them. You can skin a pheasant quicker than you can pluck it and you'll just be left holding all the skin and feathers. You can put proper clay around a hedgehog and chuck it in the fire because that way the clay holds everything together and when you break the clay off, all the spikes come off and leaves the skin, you do that because it don't burn. Usually if we were going to have it for dinner we would cook it in a normal manner, we would only boil it if we were making a stew, same with a pheasant, you would boil a pheasant to make a stew, but that was the way we used to do it, but different people did it different ways. We never had squirrel but I can't see why you can't eat them, to me all they are, is a rat or 'bantail,' we don't call them rats round here.

You see during the war people had snakes, eels, they ate worms, they ate squirrels, they ate rats mice and they're still alive. I've had eel, i used to go fishing with the little ones and when the eels came I used to take them home and we'd have jellied eels. I've never had snake knowingly, what mothers put in stews I'd never know. I'm still here, I've eaten sparrow eggs and they're no different to swans egg, I've had heaps of swans eggs, I've never been chased by a swan, usually two of us went and would go and chase them and the other one would go and get the eggs and be waist deep in water but that didn't matter, we still had the eggs. You would leave one egg in the nest because they will always come back, same is with moorhen, if you leave a couple of eggs in the nest, they'll come back again and like a pheasant, if you take some of the eggs and leave a couple they'll always come back.

Seagulls eggs, we used to go down to Old Park onto the shore and we used to get the seagull eggs and sell them to the butcher, who used to come round in a hose and cart for a tanner

each, he used to get a shilling each for them in London because all the hotels and that paid a lot of money because seagull eggs made things dark.

We used to catch deer with wires and we have chased them down with dogs and one thing and another. I started preparing a deer at ten at night and not finished until 3.00am. The way l prepared a deer was to tie his front legs down and put a knife inside and you'd have the whole skin.

I like pigs head with mushrooms, a half one not a whole one, when you get a pig's head you carve it and take the cheek off. They've got quite a big cheek, but that's another thing with Gypsies, with ox hearts and that sort of thing, the things that would get chucked away we would eat. With a pig's head or a sheep's head when they were cooked you always took the brains out and gave it to the baby, the youngest one cause it was a ritual basically. Nothing was thrown away, like with pig trotters, we used to eat those. Even the chit'lins were eaten, the insides as you know. Personally l like chit'lins, but they've done away with them now, you can't get them.

Years ago we used to take all the rabbits out and the farmer wouldn't get all the trouble with corn and that. In the old days nothing was ever said about poaching, but now it's a criminal offence. Now if somebody catches you they put you inside and all you're doing is saving the rabbits eating the corn.

When father was alive we used to go ferreting. Montague Arms at Beaulieu they had a standing order with father for two dozen rabbits every Saturday at 2s each, this was after the war. On every Friday father used to say 'boys we've got to go out and get these rabbits'. We used to ferret them or wire them. Father used to go and set his wires at night and go about 5.00am the following I morning and go round, pitch up all the rabbits and bring them back. He used to poach them on site and bring them back. He would say 'boys we're going ferreting, you're not going anywhere else'. We used to go out 6-7 in the morning, we only had one bike between us and off we'd go ferreting. We had two ferrets and you could get eight to ten rabbits out of one burrow using one ferret. We had a net that was 2ft square and we would put it over the hole and you would do each hole that you could find. There was always some you wouldn't find that wouldn't come out. lf we were around a field and there was a ditch, Father used to say we would put a bigger net down in case one got out; he used to make the nets. 99 times out of 100 we used to net the holes but, l always remember when Uncle Bruce was with us one day down at East end, you could hear the ferrets in the hole, they were running, bump, bump, bump, one came out of a pothole and we didn't see him or put a net on and he shot out of that and straight into Uncle Bruce's chest and Father said 'catch that bloody thing' he caught him in the ditch, we did have fun. Father treated it as a business; if they wanted 24 they could have 24.

You see you could go to a farmers field and get what you needed – not too much but just the odd rabbit or corn, cabbage, - potatoes when it was ready.

You can make rabbit taste like anything just by the stock you add to it. When we used wire, you set it down and put a stick in the ground to hold it. You put the wire about two inches above the ground because a rabbit don't run with its head right in the ground, then it puts its head through the wire as it runs and as it goes through of course the wire tightens and rabbits being rabbits go, they try to go forward all the time so it tightens. Usually when you go to pick them up the rabbits are just sitting there, they can't go anywhere and they don't suffer. It's when people put the grabs in that it's cruel.

I've seen my dear old mum sitting down in front of the fire saying 'if the Gavver's catch you, they'll bloody lock you', that was the way of life, we didn't take dozens of them and father had permission to go round the farmers' fields so we weren't poaching as such.

Years ago we literally lived off the land, we didn't have the money and that's all there was to it, but now I do believe it's all the additives in the food that you're getting that's causing problems.

There were only two shops in the village , one being the post office . If you went in and asked for something they would give it to you. Mother used to go in and give us her pound and we used to pay off the bill, then we used to say can we have some sweets which would go in the book again. We would be in the book all week then pay it off on Friday. Course you can't do that now because of the supermarkets.

Once a week we used to have the fish cart come round and we used to have the battery man, Fenner in an old car with the batteries, so we could buy some old batteries for our radio, but you don't get none of that now, in those days the shop keepers used to trust us.

Death/Funerals

Father was buried in the cemetery and Lord Montague was a bearer of the coffin, he was shown so much respect from the dignitaries of the village. Touch wood I think I'm respected but not to the degree that he was. What other Gypsy in the world can say he had a Lord of the Realm carrying his coffin like my father did.

Health

I feel well, and eat well now I'm older. Over the years I like to think I have kept myself fit. When I joined the army, they said join the paratroopers – it was 2 guineas a week we got paid. That was a lot of money, so I joined.

Identity

There is nothing different from you and me except the fate of our birth – this is the bit that annoys me. I can't help me being born a Gypsy – I don't have two horns. I'm not a criminal, nothing not even litter dropping. And to them we are all criminals, we are all sponging off the country. I've worked all my life never had anything off the estate. Then the newspapers say we are spongers – then they say where do you get your money form. I've got a trailer which cost me 300 quid – if I decide to live that way it's no one else's business. Other buy house for 200,000. The position is that with non Gypsies – they get something they think they own, and in some ways they do. The Gypsies have trailers as a home, that's their home. People like the Police have the right to just come in and tell you to move. I am not allowed to live the way I want to. The police think they have god given rights to just go up to a caravan and walk right in. If a Gypsy complain then they are the problem. The police are beginning to understand that they need to treat us better. When I was boy we'd have no problems with parking anywhere, Now once you move onto the road with a trailer the police will come along and do a spot check. The fact is they will say that your tyre has not got enough air in it. If we did wrong as a boy, we'd get a smack around the ear. What they do now is put you in their books and arrest you. It is the law that if someone is arrested and they can't read, someone is supposed to be called to help them. The police don't do this, they them leave in jail. The average person does not know this - they think we all smell, we are dirty, we camp illegally. They don't realize we haven't anywhere to go.

When I was a kid I was always told to respect people. I'm still the same now despite my age. The position with the government is that they are all there for the money, not for my interests at all**.**

Interview with Daisy
22/11/2016
Aged 31

I was born in hospital and then went to live in Salisbury in a house. We moved to the area when I was 7 years old.

My earliest memory is coming back from the market with two sheep. We caught the bus home with the two little sheep and we had to take them up on the top deck. It was funny. The sheep were really good I remember. At that time my dad had a little brown mini and he would take us all out in it. We went all over the place. They are happy memories.

School
I liked school and went regularly. I liked it there and I had some good friends. I remember playing outside with my friends and just having fun. I used to have a lot of friends. I had one good friend in particular and she lived in Blandford so I used to spend my weekends with her. She wasn't a Gypsy but her parents were very interested in Gypsy life. They would always go the heavy horse centre, the horse fairs and the steam fairs and I would often go with them.

Identity
I always knew that I was a Gypsy even though we couldn't really live in the Gypsy life style. It was very different then and now. It was in the 1950's. Now everyone is in houses it's all changed. You can't keep up with traditions and lifestyle when you live in a house – you can't have a horse, keep animals when you are in bricks and mortar.

How do you sustain your sense of identity?
I tell my children the stories that I have heard from my parents and grandparents but that's all I can do. My sister lets them stay over with her and she will let them have a bonfire in the back garden where they sit and tell stories and sing songs.

My grandparents moved into a house from the compounds – the council moved them, but they kept having fires in and outside the house. In the end the council moved them out – they were evicted.

Are there any traditional foods that you eat?
I didn't ever really like the food – the traditional food. Except the rasher pudding – I did like that. I don't make it but we have it when my mum or other family members make it. I know how to make the holly wreaths but it's hard to do this nowadays.

I left home at 16 years old to have my first child. I have 5 children now. My mum and dad split up when I was 13 years of age as my mum left and went to live a long way off.

The younger Gypsies like to have bling things. My children always have blinged headbands and there will always be some bling on their clothes – even their school uniform. I buy them from Ebay or specialist shops. We were never dressed like that – this is the modern Traveller way.

Patricia
6/12/2016

Tell me where you were born

I was born in the house I grew up in the village .

Identity
We consider ourselves to be Gypsies. We were brought up as Gypsies – we knew this as kids –

it was drummed into us all the time as this was our tradition. This was our tradition. We as a family kept ourselves to ourselves – we were encouraged to be like this

At Xmas, we made holly wreaths to sell. My dad worked in a prison on the Isle of Wight – he worked in the laundry. My mum worked in the fields potato picking, runner beans, picking sprouts ad pulling onions. When we were kids we would go with her. We would all be there - there would be one in the pram and one in her belly.

School
I feel it is extremely important that I am a Gypsy – it is our religion – our tradition. I feel we are exactly the same as others though.

I went to the Thorney Hill infant's school, then on to the juniors , then secondary school . We were made to go to school. Other kids did try to call us names and that but they were scared of us as they knew we would 'pop' them. I didn't like school that much but stayed until I was 16.

Life as a young woman
We were not forced to marry who our parents wanted us to. I was able to marry outside my culture. On the TV shows the girls were tiny skirts and Ive never seen any of our community dress like that. When I was young you'd have got a right smack and sent to bed. I had to wear a long skirt with a petticoat underneath when I was young. And no make-up at all. My dad used to say you were born naked and that is how your face should be- nothing on your face except the skin you were born with. I didn't dress my girls like that though, they wore just normal clothes

Traditions
We loved the traditional food – home-made steak and kidney puddings, rasher pudding. Whilst I recognise that other Gypsy traveller groups wear more traditional clothes, we never did.

As kids we had the run of the forest - although our parents were strict. If we didn't behave, we were belted and put to bed without any food. My dad would never let any outsiders in, only our own kind. There was 9 of us, so life was hard. My mum was born in a Bender in the woods.

Death
Death – is always celebrated in the traditional way – there would be lots of flowers shaped in various ways –like the gates of Heaven, a big cross. We would always sing the traditional songs and hymns . The body has to come home to say their last goodbyes and to keep the spirit moving.

Food
I still make rasher pudding and cakes but I don't make holly wreaths anymore, but my kids do. I always made sure my own children knew their heritage – they always knew they were Gypsies.

There was a better life in the past - you could work and earn a living and be independent. Nothing is done by hand anymore so there aren't the jobs that there used to be in the old days. There's too much technology these days.

Jessie
13/7/2017
24 years old

Tell me where you were born
I was born in Salisbury hospital and moved to Thorney Hill with my family when I was a baby. I am the youngest of four children. Mum and dad split up when I was 7. I lived mostly with my dad and sometimes my auntie.

Identity
I remember going mushroom picking with granny and my dad too. I loved playing in the fields and the freedom of being outside. I remember being quite lonely as a child – my older sister was always with her friend and so I used to play by myself a lot.

School
I hated school and was naughty there. I got expelled from primary school and then went to special school for naughty kids. I used to run away as often as I could. The school would pick me up and bring me home. I was never had any trouble with the police though. After I left school I went to college and learn the basic skills of floristry. That's a traditional job. I would like to go back and finish the course and get a qualification, but when my little boy grows up. I was only 15 when I met my partner and I have been with him ever since.

Culture
I learnt what I know about Gypsy culture form my parents. My grandparents were born and raised in the compounds. They told me lots of stories about the old days. My granny would work in the fields picking vegetables and fruit. She told lots of stories about Gypsy life.

I always had a lot of friends in the community and would go to the neighbours houses whenever I wanted to.

Traditions
Now we can't really celebrate our traditions in the same way but I do have fire at least once a week in the garden. The children love this – I let my nieces stay over and they love singing around the fire and telling stories. I have tried to show my nieces to make pegs but didn't manage very well – you have to have the right tools. I love the idea of travelling, the freedom and the fact that you can go off where you want to. I find the idea fascinating. I would love to have a caravan. But you can't really go coursing nowadays – there are some people who do scrapping and who work in the fields. We celebrate funerals in the old traditional ways.

I love keeping animals – I've got my dogs and also chickens, ducks and geese. And Guinea pigs and cats.

I'd love a horse but I can't afford the upkeep as we are living on benefits. Anyway, you'd have to earn a lot of money to keep a horse these days.

There are more crimes in the area now. The police seem to be around a lot more. There is more drugs and alcohol about than there was. My young cousin is always getting stopped by the police and he's only 14 years old.

The traveller way of life to me is being able to go coursing, keeping ferrets – going to fairs which we do when we can. I am bringing my own child up to know about his heritage, and I talk to him about it. We have bought him a sling shot and are teaching him how to use it. I cook traditional food sometimes, not all the time. I can make rasher pudding and stews.

Interview with Alfie: Aged 18 years
13/7/2017

Tell me where you were born
I was born in the town – about 5 miles away. We moved here about 5 years ago, but we were always up here seeing my family – gran and grandad

Tell me about your family
I'm one of five kids – I'm the oldest boy, my older sister is 2 years older than me – she is very naughty always getting into trouble

My earliest memory is sitting in my grandad's garden while he lit a fire – I used to love that when we sat around the fire in his garden

School
I liked school when I was little. The head teacher was very kind to me – he used to let me work in his office when I got into trouble. I was always being picked on … I am a slow learner and couldn't keep up. I hated secondary school and got excluded when I was 12. I never went back to school again. I just go out with my dad – gardening jobs, coursing, fishing and things like that. When I was a kid I wanted to join the RAF but I'm not clever enough

Identity
We always knew we were Gypsies. We are Gypsies and try to follow the traditions – it's easier now we don't live in a town … I like it up here as we are near the countryside. It's very annoying though because nowadays people copy us… and try to dress like us - when we go out … you know somewhere special. Like the steam fair or something like that we dress up. I will wear coursing boots and a cap and carry my catapult in my top pocket. The girls all wear dealer boots too. Yeah …you can buy them in girlie colours now. You can get them anywhere. They are ankle boots with a bit of elastic at the side …really nice – they are expensive but you can get them in different places.

Traditions and shared experiences
In the summer we go out into the old compounds and camp. We stay for a couple of nights and cook food on the fire. We all collect wood and set up a proper camp. Nowadays there are too many rules which stops us living the way we want to do …the traveller way … there's too much jealously.
And because there are some bad people we have a bad name. So we good ones can't carry on the traditions, I get into trouble if I walk around here with my catapault.
Yes like none of the kids can't use catapults any more.
But people on the sites are allowed to live the Gypsy way. They go coursing, keep horses and ride quad bikes and mini motor bikes….have fires. All the things we can't do . We are just cooped up not outside in the fresh air enough . There no where we can do what we want - If we try and shoot rabbits we get into trouble. I don't know why some people call themselves Travellers when they don't travel. We are Gypsies that's what we are.